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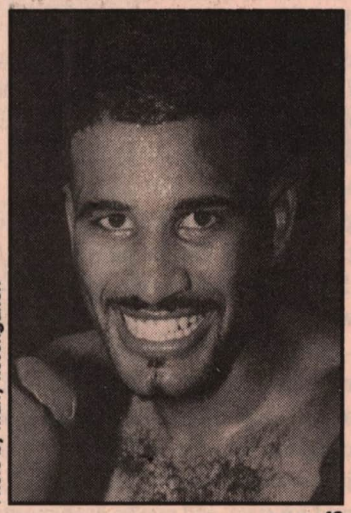

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

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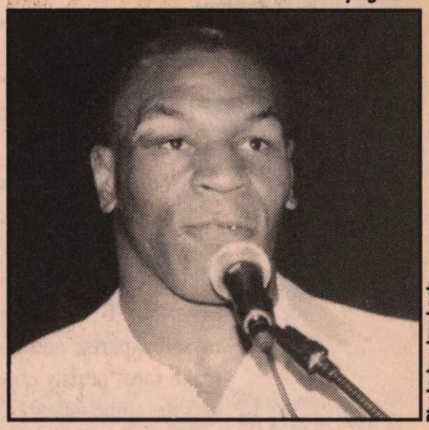

Photo by Jay Lash

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RINGSIDE

Maybe all the punches I've written about have finally caught up with me; maybe I'm just mellowing with age. But for some strange reason or another, I came away from the Naseem Hamed-Wayne McCullough fight kinda liking the cheeky little scamp from Sheffield. I find this illogical because I've always considered myself a purist, and just the mention of Naz' name is enough to make most purists cringe and then launch into a rant about how he's the embodiment of everything that's wrong with boxing today.

"The Prince" further aggravated traditionalists by transforming himself into a Hector Camacho clone in the McCullough fight. And, of course, there's nothing that hard-line fans hate more than a stinking runner. So what is it about Naz that I find so appealing?

Well, I've got to admit that it was nothing that took place inside the ring on October 31. After testing McCullough's chin early, and finding it as tough as the Belfast neighborhood where "The Pocket Rocket" grew up, Hamed took the easy way out and fought a boring, defensive battle that drew a continuous cascade of boos from the pro-McCullough crowd. It was Hamed's performance at the postfight press conference that won me over.

Hamed was in total command of the situation from the moment he stepped up to the microphone until the moment he said, "Laaaater" and swaggered out into the Atlantic City night. In between, he alternately charmed and alienated the gathering with his special brand of Anglo-Arab chutzpah. Despite all the audacious things that Hamed says, to me, there seems to be an underlying humor to his vitriolic jibes and extravagant braggadocio, a smile in his eyes even when there's a taunt on his lips.

But even if I'm dead wrong about The Prince's vibe, there's no denying the way he lorded over the press conference like a member of royalty having fun with a group of feeble-minded subjects. If he had performed anywhere near as brilliantly during the fight, his victory would have garnered far more favorable reviews in the next morning's newspapers. And therein lies the rub. Hamed's greatest sin isn't all the malarkey, it's the fact that he's bought into his own jive so completely, he's selling himself short come fight time.

The reason he failed to make McCullough his 29th knockout victim went beyond the tensile strength of McCullough's chin. Had Naz been in top physical condition, he could have mounted a sustained attack and probably have stopped the Irishman. But because he's so sure of his own invincibility, Naz didn't start serious training until a little more than a month before the fight, and came into the ring in half-ass shape.

Judging by his ready wit, Hamed is an intelligent man and, hopefully, he's learned something from his disappointing showing. Against a bigger puncher than McCullough, he might not have escaped with his unblemished record intact. And though I'm sure there are a lot of readers who would love nothing more than to see Hamed get his jugged-eared block knocked off, that might not be the best thing for boxing—not just yet, anyway. You see, the Hamed-McCullough fight drew an outstanding 12.8 rating, HBO's season-high for boxing. That means Naz beat out the likes of Oscar De La Hoya, Roy Jones, and Lennox Lewis, which is pretty good for an annoying little scalawag who was having only his second fight in the country. It also makes him a very important player in a sport starved for stars, and maybe even means that I'm not the only so-called purist who doesn't think Hamed the worst thing to happen to the old game since the demise of the 15-round title fight.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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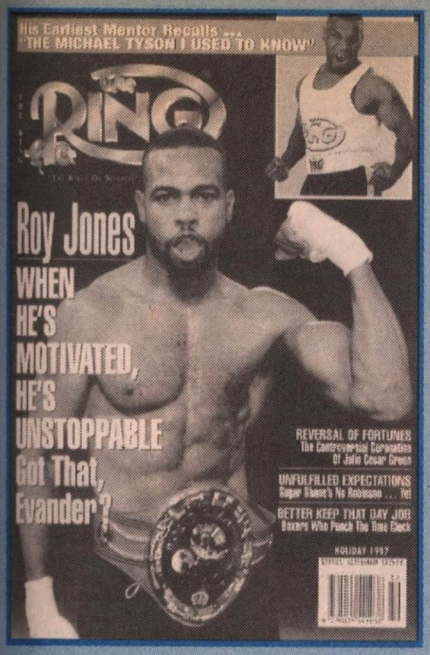

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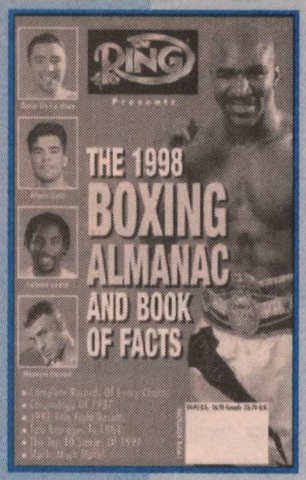

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COME OUT WRITING

We welcome your letters, which may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

A WEIGHTY ISSUE

I am a young amateur fighter who has had problems making weight in the past. I know first-hand how many other fighters in the pros feel, which is why I feel this issue should be dealt with.

I feel that many fighters who struggle to make weight in useless divisions like the junior lightweight, junior featherweight, junior bantamweight, and junior flyweight divisions risk their health and lives.

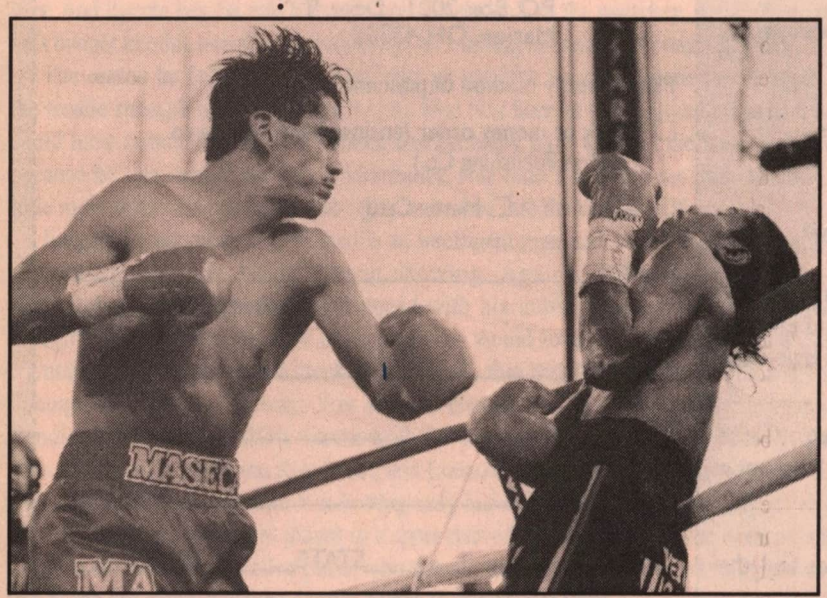
Back in 1994, James Toney was severely weakened, having fought at 181 pounds in his victory over Vinson Durham, then losing 14 pounds to fight Roy Jones at 167 six months later. And let's not forget the Gabe Ruelas-Jimmy Garcia fight back in 1995, how it ended, and why. It ended the way it did, with Garcia dying, partially because he lost too much weight in a very short period of time. The safety of the fighters should be the number-one priority.

ELLIOT KING
Ypsilanti, MI

OSCAR'S PLACE IN HISTORY

I have been a boxing fan all of my life and boxed off-and-on for seven years. I have seen many great fighters, like Lupe Pintor, Miguel Canto, Bazooka Limon, Salvador Sanchez, and Alexis Arguello. Those guys were real fighters! I hate to burst all the critics' bubbles, but in my eyes, Oscar De La Hoya now deserves mention alongside those fighters.

Everybody who says that Oscar is not real or that he has not fought anybody with firepower needs to wake up and smell the coffee. Critics are beginning to sound like Julio Cesar "Sore Loser" Chavez after Oscar beat him the first time. I was there when Oscar tore Chavez to pieces, and couldn't have done it any better than that with meat tenderizer. Oscar has been put to the test every single time he enters the ring.



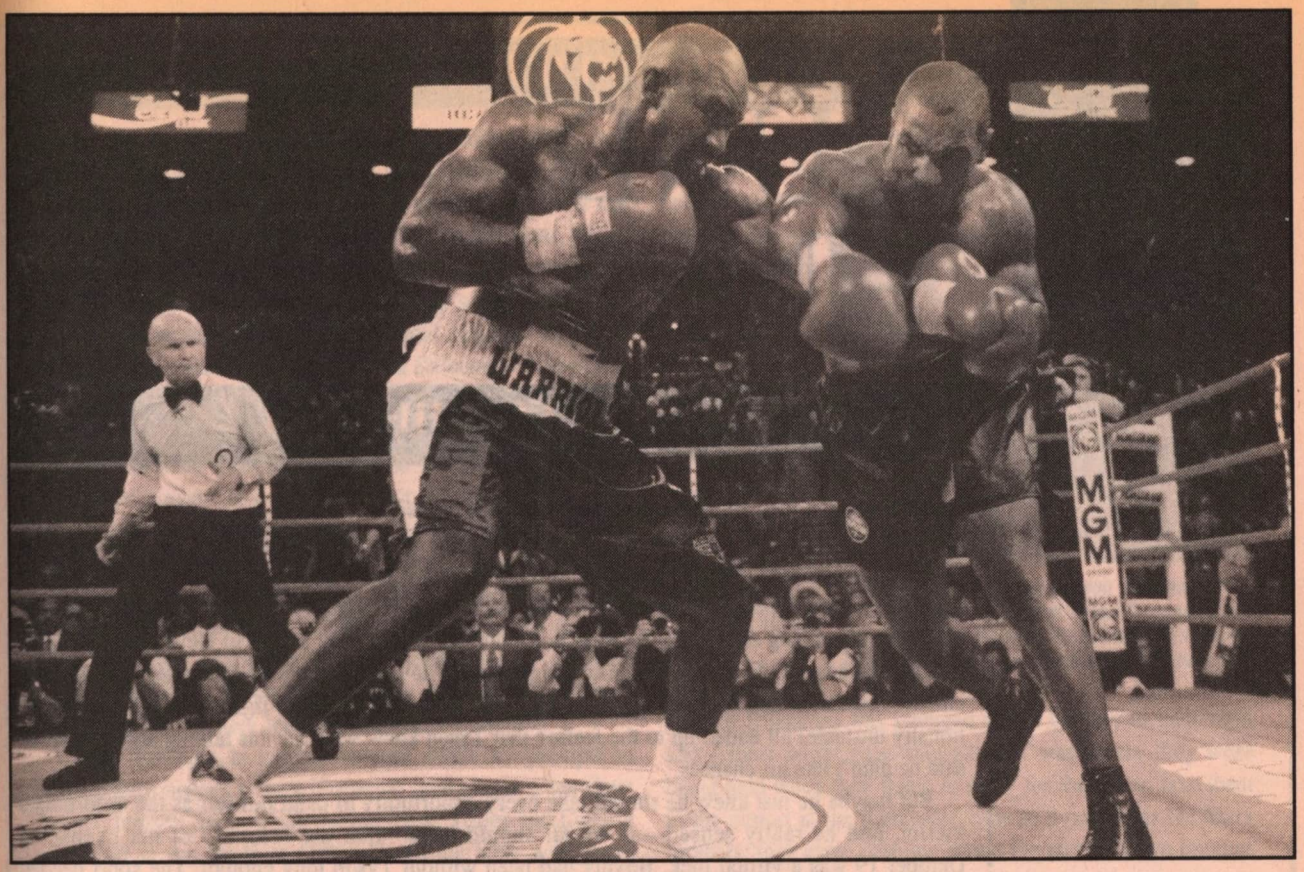
Losing large amounts of weight close to a fight is very dangerous, stresses reader Elliot King, an amateur boxer. King feels rapid weight loss led to the death of Jimmy Garcia in his fight against then-WBC super featherweight champion Gabe Ruelas in 1995.

Most people choose their careers because they love what they do, and they want to make money. Oscar has done the same thing, and just because he doesn't get his ear bitten off and he does not cut or bleed does not mean that he has not had a real fight.

JOEL AGUILAR
San Antonio, TX

This is in response to William Dettloff's article "Oscar De La Hoya vs. The All-Time Greats" (November 1998). How in the world can he say, "'The Golden Boy's' chin is high-quality"? Does Mr. Dettloff remember when feather-fisted Pernell Whitaker knocked Oscar down?

De La Hoya has feasted on nothing but blown-up lightweights and incredibly ordinary fighters. He hasn't fought a top-notch welterweight yet who could punch. Thomas



Despite his many foibles, Mike Tyson is the greatest heavyweight who ever lived, says reader Jason Iron Hawk. He feels Tyson's actions in his second fight against Evander Holyfield were justifiable considering Holyfield's constant headbutts.

Hearns would knock De La Hoya out in about four rounds. As far as De La Hoya's height being a factor against Ray Leonard, it wouldn't be. Hearns was over six feet tall, and Oscar would only be an inch taller than Sugar Ray. Leonard's superior hand and foot speed would make all of the difference. Leonard had an exceptional chin, a decent punch, and he was always in great shape (remember, it was 15 rounds back then). Sugar Ray would stop De La Hoya like he did Wilfred Benitez.

Mr. Dettloff should wake up and realize that De La Hoya needs to start fighting top-notch fighters, as Leonard and Hearns did throughout their careers, if he is to be even considered in the same breath as the names mentioned above.

MIKE YAW
Defiance, OH

LONG LIVE TYSON

I've had enough of all the Tyson bashing. It has become ridiculous and I, for one, am sick of it. Has everyone forgotten it was "Iron Mike" who saved boxing and finally brought some real excitement to the sport?

I'm tired of all the bull about how Tyson will never be an Ali, Marciano, or Foreman, etc. Mike would have destroyed all of those "Old-Time Greats." Tyson is without a doubt the greatest heavyweight of all-time. At just 18 years of age, he began disposing of all the contenders and pretenders in the heavyweight division. He became the youngest champion ever and he unified all three belts in the ring. Tyson is awesome, but of course, he's human like all of us, and yes, he does make mistakes. But only a coward would kick a man when he's down.

I don't blame Tyson for biting Holyfield. Hell, I would have bitten off his whole head if he kept headbutting me throughout two fights, not to mention Holyfield's low blows, his holding and hitting, and his wrestling tactics. Holyfield may have beaten Tyson, but he'll never *be* Tyson. I know if there is a third fight between them, Mike will prevail, like I believe he would have in the second fight if Holyfield kept his big head to himself.

JASON IRON HAWK
Rapid City, SD

SUGAR INTAKE

I'm an ex-fighter who has trained on the East and West Coasts, and trained with some of the most well-known fighters and champions in the world. However, I've never been as impressed with a fighter as I've been with Sugar Shane Mosley. Sometimes you see guys in the gym who look like world-beaters, but they don't carry that ability over into real fights. That's not the case with Sugar Shane. He's the most talented and most exciting fighter out there.

There's one thing I can't understand: Why isn't he rated in any of the major boxing magazines' pound-for-pound lists? For example, you've had Genaro Hernandez rated in the past, and I feel Shane is as good as Hernandez ever was, if not better.

BOBBY JASMIN
Santa Monica, CA

[Editor's Note: Mosley entered our pound-for-pound rankings in the January 1999 issue, and you'll find him at number nine on this month's list.] ■

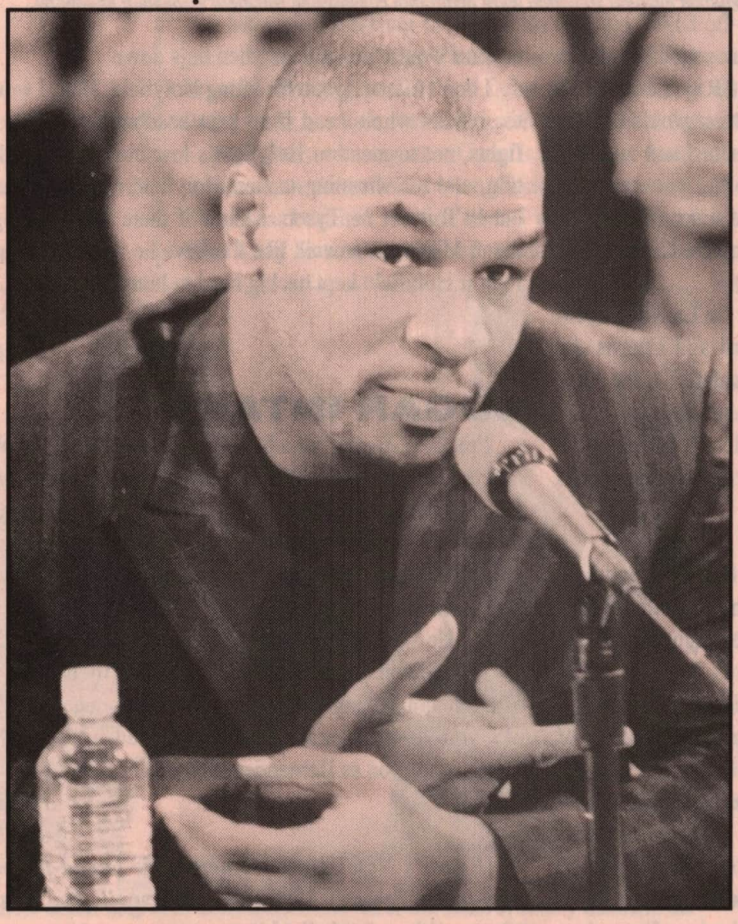
ROUND ONE

GNAW-T FINISHED YET

"I don't think they are going to give me back my license."

Mike Tyson spoke those words after a workout in Phoenix a week before the Nevada State Athletic Commission voted 4-1 to restore the two-time former heavyweight champion's boxing license, and many people believed him. The comments he made in his interview with *Playboy* about his impending doom, the decision to switch back from New Jersey to Nevada (presumably because his advisers feared he was going to get turned down in Jersey), and the release of his psychiatric reports (which revealed that even though he's technically fit to fight, he's still quite emotionally unstable) all added up to the feeling that Tyson knew what he was talking about when he said he didn't like his chances.

But maybe he just knew he should take every opportunity to paint himself as the unfortunate victim, and he really sensed—as we all should have—that the recovery of his license on October 19 was a virtual lock. Boxing had been without Tyson long enough. The sport needed him to generate headlines, and any question over whether Tyson can still do that can be answered by comparing the pages and pages of coverage garnered by his relicensing to the minuscule blurbs mentioning that Evander Holyfield and Lennox Lewis are getting set to unify the heavyweight title.



It took a little while, but Tyson found his way back

The Nevada casinos want to make money, and the last thing they want to see is millions of dollars slipping through their fingers while Tyson heads off to Europe to fight. But money wasn't the only factor ensuring the decision in Tyson's favor. At his initial Nevada hearing on September 19, the NSAC told Tyson that if his psychiatric report deemed him qualified to fight, that would be good enough for them.

Whether or not Tyson deserves the right to fight is a matter of pure opinion. Most people feel he didn't deserve to have his psychiatric results released to the public, but once they came into the boxing commission's possession, they became public record, and it didn't matter what anybody thought was right or wrong. The fact is Tyson needs boxing, boxing needs Tyson, and we should have known not to doubt that the two would find each other once again.

—Eric Raskin

FAB FOUR INVADE LONDON

For a few days in London, Carlos Ortiz, Emile Griffith, Jose Torres, and Juan LaPorte provided a compelling reminder of what fighters and the fight game are all about, of what it is that draws us to the ringside and those dank, crowded gyms, and of why we feel justified in elevating the great ones to revered status. Fighters, you see, more than any other social group, ooze class and a worldly ordinariness in equal measure, and these four honored guests at the International Ex-boxers' Convention exude both commodities in abundance.

Cutman, manager, and publicist Howie Albert and Bernard Hart of Lonsdale arranged for the four former world champions to be present at a luncheon that attracted 500 paying guests and a host of other big names, past and present, including Henry Cooper, Gerry Cooney, John H. Stracey, Howard Winstone, Dave Charnley, Chris Eubank, John Conteh, and Earnie Shavers. Ortiz and Charnley met again for the first time since their 10-rounder in 1958, the last bout at London's famous Haringey Arena, while Torres delivered an eloquent speech on the qualities needed to become a champion.

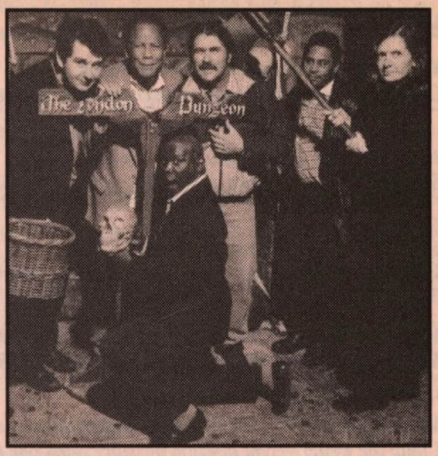
Later that night, he could have done with a few prompts on the qualities needed to be a champion pool player when Ortiz proved himself the best cue man in town. Torres and LaPorte were left in the shade as Ortiz cleared the table with gusto while his pleasant wife, Maria, duly converted $1 into $25 on the slot machines in the time it used to take the two-time world lightweight champion to land a jarring one-two.

"You scratched. You lose," cried Torres.

"Hey, we're in London," Ortiz retorted. "We're not playing by WBO rules now!"

Griffith pretended (we believe) to blow his fuse every time someone interrupted while he spoke, and Ortiz might have had every right to blow his fuse when woken up by Torres, who was trying to persuade him to hit the town after midnight.

"You crazy?" asked Ortiz before shutting the door in his face.



Clowning around at the London Dungeon (from left): RING correspondent Brian Doogan, Jose Torres, Emile Griffith (kneeling), fan Bruce Jordan, Juan LaPorte, and fan Debbie Jordan

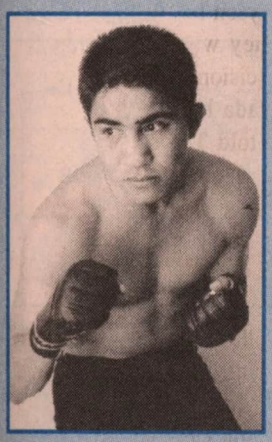
A visit to the London Dungeons was arranged on the last day of their visit, and Albert might have thought that was where they were being held when they failed to show for the bus to take them to the airport at the designated time of 3 p.m. Like the Marx brothers, they came dashing 'round the corner at two minutes past.

"We went to see London Bridge, and guess what—it fell!" declared Ortiz to make light of the situation.

The ex-champions warmed many hearts while in town, and it is hoped by many British fans that this visit will not have been their last.

—Brian Doogan

THE OTHER HALL



Pimentel: Inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame

IBF lightweight champion Shane Mosley, the seamless boxer-puncher who gains more recognition with each outing, was named Fighter of the Year at the 19th annual World Boxing Hall of Fame dinner in Los Angeles. The beaming Mosley thanked, among others, Zack Padilla and Genaro Hernandez, who began sparring with him when he was a 15-year-old amateur. Both congratulated Mosley as he accepted a championship belt from the Hall of Fame, which plans to open a museum on the West Coast.

About 900 people attended the dinner, and sometimes it seemed each of the 900 was asking the other 899 attendees for autographs. Among the busiest signers were such luminaries as Eddie Futch and Carmen Basilio.

Boxers newly named to the Hall of Fame were Jose Becerra, Curtis Cokes, Chuck Davey, Clarence Henry, Jesus Pimentel, and Phil Terranova. In the non-boxer, expanded category, recipients were Charles "Doc" Broadus, Chuck Hassett, Jimmy Lennon Jr., Joe Ponce, and Danny Wambolt. Named to posthumous awards were Les Darcy, Harry Jeffra, Tony Olivera, Dave Sands, and Teddy Yarosz.

A magnanimous Danny Valdivia, who was master of ceremonies, called rival announcer Lennon "the number-one announcer in boxing."

Former lightweight champion Mando Ramos received a special humanitarian award for his volunteer work with teens, and Gwen Adair received an award for being the first (and so far only) female referee to work a world title bout.

—Ivan Goldman

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
10-5-98	Isidro Garcia W 12 Jesus Chong	FOXSN	fl	C+	B-	C+
Classic case of speed beating power; Garcia too fast, too slick						
10-8-98	Alex Stewart KO 4 Ezra Sellers	FOXSN	h	D+	B+	A-
Shopworn Stewart comes of the floor to win wild one						
10-9-98	David Telesco KO 4 Frank Tate	ESPN2	lh	B	B+	B-
Veteran Tate ambushed; title shot around the corner for Telesco						
10-10-98	**Sharmba Mitchell W 12 Khalid Rahilou**	**Show**	**WBA jw**	**A**	**A**	**B+**
Mitchell makes overdue title shot worth the wait; Rahilou lucky to last distance						
10-10-98	James Page KO 2 Andrei Pestriaev	Show	w	A-	B+	A-
Could the welterweight division possibly stand one more exciting knockout artist?						
10-16-98	Israel Cardona W 12 Golden Johnson	ESPN2	l	B+	B+	B+
Good win for "Pito," but not good enough to make us think he can beat Mosley						
10-17-98	Eric Morel W 12 Victor Burgos	Uni	fl	B-	B-	B-
Morel still hot, passes decent test in tough Burgos						
10-17-98	Frankie Randall KO 6 Juan Soberanes	Uni	w	B-	C	C+
If Randall gets in shape, he might make some noise at 147						
10-23-98	Hector Camacho Jr. W 10 Fred Curiel	FOXSN	jw	C	C	C
We're starting to think Junior inherited his father's distaste for combat						
10-23-98	Monte Barrett W 10 Greg Page	FOXSN	h	D	B-	C-
Think Page wishes now that he had laid off the Clark Bars in the '80s?						
10-23-98	Paul Spadafora W 10 Sam Girard	ESPN2	jw	C	C	C+
Slick southpaw Spadafora not a heavy hitter, but he sure can box						
10-23-98	Hector Camacho W 10 Ken Sigurani	ESPN2	jm	C	B	C
Why is Camacho, one of the dullest fighters of his era, always on television?						
10-24-98	John Brown KO 8 Gabe Ruelas	HBO	l	A-	A-	B+
Another impressive outing for Brown; probably time for Ruelas to move on						
10-24-98	David Reid W 12 James Coker	HBO	jm	A-	B+	C+
"The American Dream" shows us he can win ugly						
10-30-98	**Arthur Williams KO 9 Imamu Mayfield**	**ESPN2**	**IBF c**	**A-**	**A**	**B**
The third time's a charm for "King Arthur"; Mayfield's soft chin exposed						
10-31-98	**Vuyani Bungu W 12 Danny Romero**	**HBO**	**IBF jf**	**A**	**A+**	**B-**
Can anyone explain why Romero spends so much time moving and boxing?						
10-31-98	Naseem Hamed W 12 Wayne McCullough	HBO	f	A+	C+	C
Did we miss a meeting? When did "The Prince" turn into Hector Camacho?						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF

Reading *Max Schmeling: An Autobiography* (217 pages, Bonus Books, $28.95 hard cover), you can't help but feel that Schmeling is an extraordinary man who has lived through extraordinary times. Those times are vividly portrayed in this compelling account of perhaps the most misunderstood athlete of the 20th century.

The book traces the oldest living former heavyweight champ from his modest youth in Germany to the wealth of success boxing brought him, both financially and socially. Schmeling recalls the time he was first attracted to the sport, watching a film of the heavyweight title fight between Georges Carpentier and Jack Dempsey, the champion he admired and coincidentally resembled.

The most riveting part of the book, as expected, is the chapter on the second fight Schmeling had with Joe Louis. Schmeling was falsely represented in the United States as a figurehead of the evil empire, Nazi Germany, while Louis was depicted as staunch American muscle. Schmeling tried to explain—to no avail—to Americans he wasn't a Nazi. If he were, Schmeling reasoned, why would he have a Jewish manager, Joe Jacobs, who was not only a manager but a personal confidant to Schmeling throughout his career?

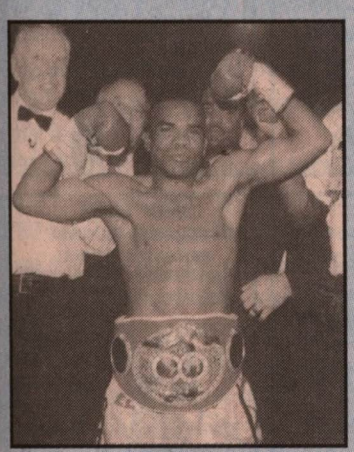
Schmeling ponders the positive effects his loss to Louis had. "A victory over Joe Louis would have made me forever 'The Aryan Show Horse' of the Third Reich," Schmeling writes. The tales of persecution Schmeling endured in the U.S. and his native Germany give one a greater understanding of why he is as revered today by Germans as Joe Louis is by Americans.

—Joe Santoliquito

INTERIM INSANITY

We've pretty much come to terms with the fact that boxing has 17 recognized weight divisions, some of them separated by as few as three pounds, and that three different organizations, the WBC, WBA, and IBF, can all stake their claims to so-called world title status. But for each of the organizations, having 17 men to call champion is no longer enough. As of mid-October, there were also five "interim" champions. And four of those five had been crowned in a span of just over a month, from August 23 to October 3! Why do we need all these interim champions? Isn't an interim champion just a number-one contender with a belt?

In March, Graciano Rocchigiani beat Michael Nunn, and was awarded the WBC interim light heavyweight title because Roy Jones wasn't sure if he still wanted it. In August, Wandee Chor Chareon defeated Rocky Lin to become the WBC's interim strawweight champ, pending Ricardo Lopez' rematch with Rosendo Alvarez. In September, Robert Allen followed up a technical draw with IBF middleweight champ Bernard Hopkins by destroying hopeless Abdula Ramadan for the interim title. Though they're called champions, boxing fans know Rocchigiani's not a champion until he beats Jones, Wandee's not a champion until he beats Lopez, and Allen's not a champion until he beats Hopkins. They all have belts, yet they're sitting around waiting for title shots.



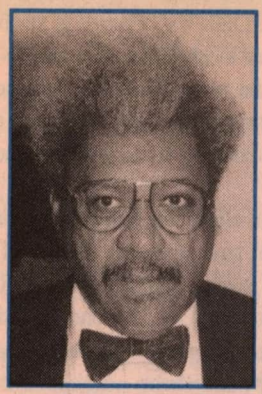
Pastrana, a former IBF champ, is now a WBA interim titlist

But the WBA may be the worst of all. On October 3, a fight card in the organization's home base, Caracas, Venezuela, featured three absurd "world title" fights. While WBA 122-pound champ Enrique Sanchez waited for a cut to heal, Carlos Barreto was installed as interim champ after decisioning Hector Acero-Sanchez, and was subsequently scheduled to challenge Sanchez in December. With Hugo Soto supposedly injured, Mauricio Pastrana outpointed Jose Bonilla to become not the WBA's number-one flyweight contender, but its interim champ. And though the word "interim" wasn't involved, Venezuelan Antonio Cermeno kayoed Genaro Rios to claim the WBA featherweight title *less than two weeks after Fred Norwood lost it on the scales*! Both Cermeno and Rios, incidentally, had been soundly beaten by Norwood earlier in the year. Throw in the mess with James Page gaining the right to fight Jose Luis Lopez for the vacant WBA welterweight championship by beating Andrei Pestriaev in what was billed as a title fight, and the WBA has got a lot of explaining to do—and entirely too many champions.

Allen's the IBF interim middleweight champ, for whatever that's worth

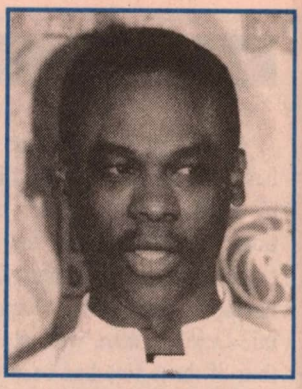
—Eric Raskin

OUTSIDE THE ROPES



King: Appeal denied

When **Don King** was acquitted of insurance fraud charges over the summer, the jury was unable to reach a verdict on charges against his promotional company, Don King Productions. Although prosecutors indicated they didn't plan to pursue the case against the company, lawyers for DKP appealed to the Supreme Court in October to try to ensure that King's testimony in the original 1995 trial could not be used against the company. The high court turned down the appeal without comment ... Former heavyweight champ **Joe Frazier** filed a legal action against the city of Philadelphia on October 6, alleging that police officers used excessive force when they arrested him on April 7 on drunken driving charges for which he was later acquitted. Frazier, 54, said officer **Edward Sterling** handcuffed him tightly and shoved him into the back of his patrol car, where he remained in a painful position for 40 minutes. Frazier said that as a result he needs surgery on his right shoulder. As of press time, Frazier had not yet formally sued the city ... Former **Mike Tyson** co-manager **John Horne** filed a suit against Iron Mike's new adviser, **Shelly Finkel**, in mid-October, seeking a 10-percent share in any money Tyson makes from his next five fights. Though Tyson left Horne in March, Horne contends he still has contractual ties to the former champ ... The IBF announced in early-October that **Doug Beavers**, the sanctioning body's ratings chairman for the past 14 years, had been forced to resign because of the passage of the Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996. The Safety Act states that any member of a state athletic commission can't be an official of a sanctioning body. Beavers, who is a member of the Virginia State Athletic Commission, was immediately replaced by **Daryl Peoples**, an administrative assistant to IBF President **Bob Lee** ... In mid-October, the International Boxing Hall of Fame secured $250,000 in state funds for construction and expansion of its museum. The expansion plans could call for a second building or an addition to the current museum, which is located in Canastota, New York ... Japanese junior bantam **Takato Toguchi**, 28, was scheduled to challenge **Satoshi Iida** for the WBA 115-pound title on December 23, but a mid-October CATscan revealed Toguchi had suffered brain damage, forcing him not only to withdraw from the fight, but to retire from the sport. His career record was 23-3 (19). Toguchi will be replaced by Venezuelan challenger **Jesus "Kiki" Rojas.**



Horne: Suing Finkel

THE PUNCHLINES

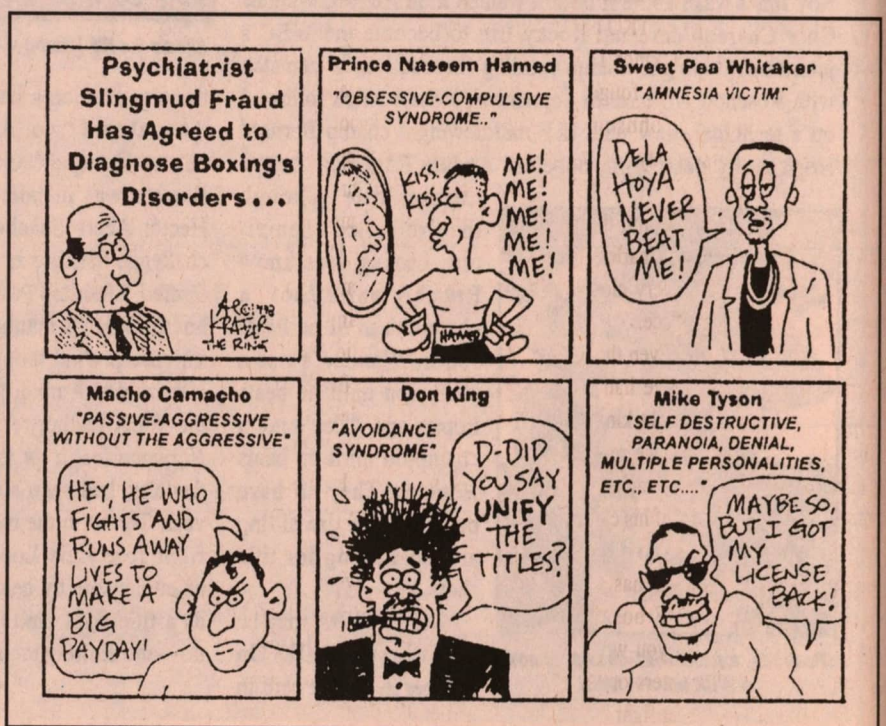
"I wave the [American] flag because I have a Ph.D. in Caucasianism."

—Don King, during his speech at a "Don King Day" in Newark, New Jersey

"This is not about boxing anymore. It's about the selling of a product, an image. It's like *Halloween XIII*, another sequel to a story everyone's familiar with."

—Teddy Atlas, on Tyson's return

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For period ended November 3, 1998)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Welterweight
2. **ROY JONES** Light Heavyweight
3. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Heavyweight
4. **FELIX TRINIDAD** Welterweight
5. **MARK JOHNSON** Flyweight
6. **PERNELL WHITAKER** Welterweight
7. **NASEEM HAMED** Featherweight
8. **JOHNNY TAPIA** Junior Bantamweight
9. **SHANE MOSLEY** Lightweight
10. **RICARDO LOPEZ** Strawweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No movement. For those wondering why soon-to-be-50 George Foreman stays so high at number three, just look at the remainder of the field and how unproven everyone else is. Michael Grant could pass him soon, but Grant's been on the shelf since May with hepatitis.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Veteran campaigner Arthur Williams, who stopped Imamu Mayfield to win the IBF title, rises from seventh to third. Mayfield falls to sixth.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Hard-punching David Telesco makes his debut at number 10, thanks to his fourth-round TKO of perennial contender Frank Tate. Former IBF champ William Guthrie, who hasn't fought since he lost the title to Reggie Johnson in early-February, exits due to inactivity.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Unheralded German Sven Ottke crashes into the ratings at number four after upsetting Charles Brewer for the IBF title. As it was a very close decision, Brewer only slips to fifth place.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Even though fourth-ranked Otis Grant will have had his shot at WBA/WBC light heavyweight king Roy Jones by the time you read this, we're keeping the Canadian in the 160-pound ranks, where he's competed throughout most of his career.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Although Olympian Fernando Vargas has an excellent chance of unseating IBF boss Yory Boy Campas on December 12, you won't find him here because we rank fighters on accomplishment, not potential, and that fight had not taken place at press time. Campas will be the first world-class opponent Vargas has fought in the pros. Ditto for Vargas' Olympic teammate David Reid.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Former WBA champ Ike Quartey, who shouldn't be penalized because his bout with Oscar De La Hoya was postponed, leapfrogs over Pernell Whitaker into the number-three spot, while "Sweet Pea" dips to fourth because of continued inactivity.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT: Sharmba Mitchell zooms from 10th to second thanks to his dominating, title-winning performance against Khalid Rahilou. The ex-champ, who was lucky to finish on his feet, descends to the seventh position.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: WBC champion Cesar Bazan keeps his number-three ranking with a workmanlike defense against Mauro Lucero, and Israel Cardona stays at number five with a hard-fought win over Golden Johnson.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: IBF titlist Roberto Garcia climbs past former WBA champ Yong Soo Choi with a thrilling, off-the-floor kayo of Ramon Ledon to take over the number-four position. Choi drops a spot to fifth.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Okay, so Naseem Hamed didn't look so phenomenal dancing his way past Wayne McCullough, but he's still number one among the 126-pounders.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT: Understated craftsman Vuyani Bungu keeps his top spot (and the IBF belt) with a points win over two-division former champ Danny Romero, who enters at number 10 on the basis of his strong showing against the South African.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Nothing much happening the past 30 days, but if Johnny Tapia is successful in his December 5 bid to win the WBA title from Nana Konadu, there will be a major shakeup.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: If Tapia beats Konadu, the IBF title will be vacant and the division wide open.

FLYWEIGHTS: No significant moves this month, but IBF boss Mark Johnson is eager to fight WBA interim champ Mauricio Pastrana, and if that happens, it could be the first step to at least partial unification.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: WBA ruler Pichitnoi C. Siriwat stopped Taekil Lee in defense of the title to strengthen his grip on the number-two spot behind longstanding top dog Saman Sorjaturong.

STRAWWEIGHTS: There won't be any substantial movement among the 105-pounders until we can consider the mid-November rematch between WBC champ Ricardo Lopez and WBA titlist Rosendo Alvarez.

POUND-FOR-POUND: Status quo. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended November 3, 1998

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

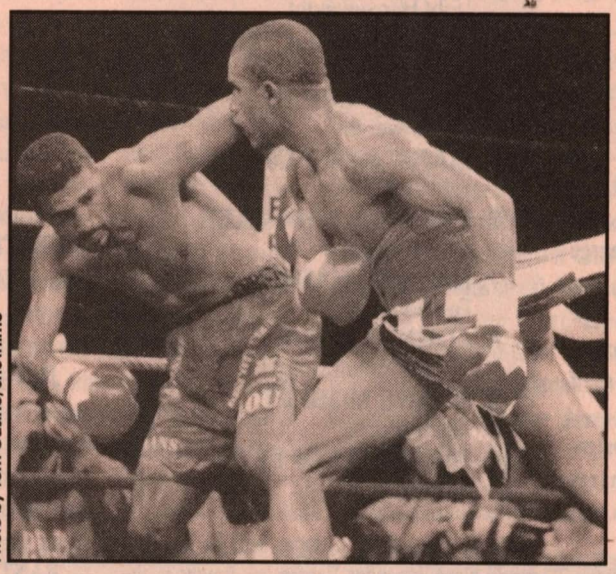


Photo by Tom Casino/Showtime

Mitchell jumped to number two at 140 pounds by dethroning Rahilou

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD**
   Fairburn, GA *36-3 (WBA/IBF Champ)*
2. **LENNOX LEWIS**
   England *34-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **GEORGE FOREMAN**
   Marshall, TX *76-5*
4. **MICHAEL GRANT**
   Norristown, PA *28-0*
5. **MICHAEL MOORER**
   Detroit, MI *39-2*
6. **SHANNON BRIGGS**
   New York, NY *31-2*
7. **CHRIS BYRD**
   Flint, MI *26-0*
8. **IKE IBEABUCHI**
   Dallas, TX *19-0*
9. **DAVID TUA**
   Totowa, NJ *31-1*
10. **ANDREW GOLOTA**
    Chicago, IL *32-3*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   France *39-1 (WBA Champ)*
2. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ**
   Germany *24-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS**
   Las Vegas, NV *29-4-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ**
   Argentina *24-2-1*
5. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England *24-4*
6. **IMAMU MAYFIELD**
   New Brunswick, NJ *18-2*
7. **ROBERT DANIELS**
   Miami, FL *38-3-1*
8. **RALF ROCCHIGIANI**
   Germany *40-9-7*
9. **SAUL MONTANA**
   Mexico *32-6*
10. **KENNY KEENE**
    Emmett, ID *43-3*

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL *37-1 (WBC/WBA Champ)*
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany *38-0*
3. **REGGIE JOHNSON**
   Houston, TX *38-5-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL *32-1*
5. **GRACIANO ROCCHIGIANI**
   Germany *40-4-1 (WBC Interim Champ)*
6. **LOU DEL VALLE**
   Bronx, NY *28-2*
7. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND *43-3*
8. **MICHAEL NUNN**
   Davenport, IA *53-4*
9. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL *11-0*
10. **DAVID TELESCO**
    Port Chester, NY *20-2*

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **FRANKIE LILES**
   N. Hollywood, CA *32-1 (WBA Champ)*
2. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales *25-0*
3. **RICHIE WOODHALL**
   England *25-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany *13-0 (IBF Champ)*
5. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA *32-6*
6. **ROBIN REID**
   England *26-1-1*
7. **THOMAS TATE**
   Houston, TX *35-5*
8. **VINCENZO NARDIELLO**
   Italy *33-6*
9. **HEROL GRAHAM**
   England *48-6*
10. **ANDREI SCHKALIKOV**
    Russia *29-4-1*

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Philadelphia, PA *34-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. *26-1-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France *26-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **OTIS GRANT**
   Canada *31-1-1*
5. **KEITH HOLMES**
   Washington, D.C. *30-2*
6. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA *21-2-1*
7. **ROBERT ALLEN**
   Atlanta, GA *23-2 (IBF Interim Champ)*
8. **ROBERT McCRACKEN**
   England *32-0*
9. **JULIO CESAR GREEN**
   Brooklyn, NY *23-3*
10. **RYAN RHODES**
    England *17-1*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **YORY BOY CAMPAS**
   Mexico *72-2 (IBF Champ)*
2. **LAURENT BOUDOUANI**
   France *37-2-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **KEITH MULLINGS**
   Brooklyn, NY *16-4-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **HARRY SIMON**
   Namibia *17-0*
5. **JULIO CESAR VASQUEZ**
   Argentina *60-3*
6. **WINKY WRIGHT**
   St. Petersburg, FL *38-2*
7. **BRONCO McKART**
   Monroe, MI *35-2*
8. **TONY MARSHALL**
   Albany, NY *30-7-6*
9. **EMMETT LINTON**
   Tacoma, WA *25-2*
10. **RAUL MARQUEZ**
    Houston, TX *29-1*

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Whittier, CA *29-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico *33-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **IKE QUARTEY**
   Ghana *34-0-1*
4. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Norfolk, VA *41-2-1*
5. **JOSE LUIS LOPEZ**
   Mexico *42-3-2*
6. **OBA CARR**
   Detroit, MI *46-2-1*
7. **JAMES PAGE**
   Pittsburg, CA *22-3*
8. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA *25-0*
9. **WILFREDO RIVERA**
   Puerto Rico *28-3-1*
10. **SHANNAN TAYLOR**
    Australia *22-0-1*

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **VINCE PHILLIPS**
   Las Vegas, NV *39-3 (IBF Champ)*
2. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. *43-2 (WBA Champ)*
3. **MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ**
   Mexico *43-1-1*
4. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia *21-1-1*
5. **HECTOR LOPEZ**
   Palmdale, CA *39-6-1*
6. **BOLILLO GONZALEZ**
   Mexico *48-3-1*
7. **KHALID RAHILOU**
   France *32-3*
8. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ**
   Mexico *100-3-2*
9. **DIOBELYS HURTADO**
   Miami, FL *26-1*
10. **REGGIE GREEN**
    Clinton, MD *28-2*

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA *29-0 (IBF Champ)*
2. **JEAN-BAPTISTE MENDY**
   France *52-7-2 (WBA Champ)*
3. **CESAR BAZAN**
   Mexico *34-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO *24-1*
5. **ISRAEL CARDONA**
   Hartford, CT *30-2*
6. **ORZUBEK NAZAROV**
   Japan *26-1*
7. **PHILLIP HOLIDAY**
   South Africa *33-1*
8. **IVAN ROBINSON**
   Philadelphia, PA *26-2*
9. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ *29-3*
10. **JAMES LEIJA**
    San Antonio, TX *36-3-2*

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR**
   Grand Rapids, MI *18-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN *25-2-1*
3. **TAKANORI HATAKEYAMA**
   Japan *22-0-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **ROBERTO GARCIA**
   Oxnard, CA *31-0 (IBF Champ)*
5. **YONG SOO CHOI**
   South Korea *24-3-1*
6. **GENARO HERNANDEZ**
   Los Angeles, CA *38-2-1*
7. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Austin, TX *25-1*
8. **GOYO VARGAS**
   Mexico *37-6-1*
9. **ANATOLY ALEXANDROV**
   Kazakhstan *34-3*
10. **ARNULFO CASTILLO**
    Mexico *28-0-2*

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **NASEEM HAMED**
   England *31-0*
2. **LUISITO ESPINOSA**
   Philippines *43-7 (WBC Champ)*
3. **FRED NORWOOD**
   St. Louis, MO *32-0-1*
4. **DERRICK GAINER**
   Pensacola, FL *25-4*
5. **ANTONIO CERMENO**
   Venezuela *32-2 (WBA Champ)*
6. **MANUEL MEDINA**
   Mexico *55-10 (IBF Champ)*
7. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico *27-1*
8. **ANGEL VAZQUEZ**
   Hartford, CT *16-0*
9. **CESAR SOTO**
   Mexico *52-7-2*
10. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ**
    Puerto Rico *50-8-3*

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **VUYANI BUNGU**
   South Africa *36-2 (IBF Champ)*
2. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico *31-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **KENNEDY McKINNEY**
   Memphis, TN *33-3-1*
4. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Mexico *47-2*
5. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH**
   Las Vegas, NV *22-2*
6. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ**
   Mexico *24-0-1 (WBA Champ)*
7. **CARLOS BARRETO**
   Venezuela *13-0 (WBA Interim Champ)*
8. **MBULELO BOTILE**
   South Africa *23-1*
9. **RAFAEL DEL VALLE**
   Puerto Rico *23-2-1*
10. **DANNY ROMERO**
    Albuquerque, NM *33-3*

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **TIM AUSTIN**
   Cincinnati, OH *18-0-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **NANA KONADU**
   Ghana *39-3 (WBA Champ)*
3. **JOICHIRO TATSUYOSHI**
   Japan *17-4-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **JORGE ELIECER JULIO**
   Colombia *40-1*
5. **SIRIMONGKOL SINGMANASSUK**
   Thailand *16-1*
6. **PAULIE AYALA**
   Ft. Worth, TX *24-1*
7. **VEERAPHOL SAHAPROM**
   Thailand *15-1*
8. **DAORUNG C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand *61-6-3*
9. **ADAN VARGAS**
   Mexico *28-1-1*
10. **DARIO AZUAGA**
    Paraguay *42-0-1*

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
   Albuquerque, NM *44-0-2 (IBF Champ)*
2. **IN JOO CHO**
   South Korea *13-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **SATOSHI IIDA**
   Japan *25-1-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines *39-1-2*
5. **YOKTHAI SITHOAR**
   Thailand *14-1-1*
6. **HAROLD GREY**
   Colombia *22-2*
7. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia *23-0*
8. **RATANACHAI DUTCHBOY GYM**
   Thailand *25-3*
9. **JULIO GAMBOA**
   Nicaragua *21-3*
10. **JOEL LUNA ZARATE**
    Mexico *32-2-2*

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. *36-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **CHATCHAI DUTCHBOY GYM**
   Thailand *33-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **HUGO SOTO**
   Argentina *50-5-2 (WBA Champ)*
4. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia *20-0 (WBA Interim Champ)*
5. **JOSE BONILLA**
   Venezuela *24-5*
6. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand *29-1*
7. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico *37-3*
8. **RUBEN SANCHEZ-LEON**
   Mexico *22-7-1*
9. **DAVID GUERAULT**
   France *13-0*
10. **CHOKVIWAT CHOKCHAI**
    Thailand *30-3*

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **SAMAN SORJATURONG**
   Thailand *38-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **PICHITNOI C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand *20-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **BABY JAKE MATLALA**
   South Africa *49-10-2*
4. **JUAN CORDOBA**
   Argentina *32-4-3*
5. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO**
   Mexico *52-5-4*
6. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines *25-3-1*
7. **OSVALDO GUERRERO**
   Mexico *24-3*
8. **YEOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea *18-1*
9. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
   South Africa *14-0*
10. **HADAO CP GYM**
    Thailand *36-11-1*

STRAWWEIGHT
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Mexico *46-0-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua *24-0-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **ZOLANI PETELO**
   South Africa *13-2-2 (IBF Champ)*
4. **WANDEE CHOR CHAREON**
   Thailand *22-3 (WBC Interim Champ)*
5. **RATANAPOL SOR VORAPIN**
   Thailand *36-3-1*
6. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand *38-1*
7. **ROCKY LIN**
   Philippines *26-2*
8. **ALA VILLAMOR**
   Philippines *29-2-1*
9. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico *19-1-1*
10. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
    Columbia *30-2*

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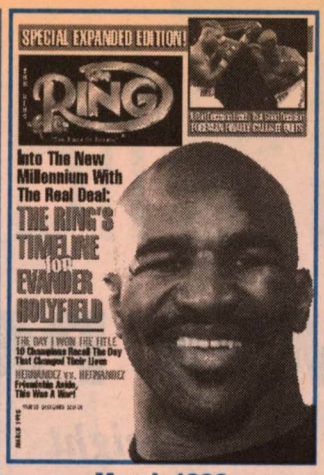

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NEW FACES

JAMES PAGE

Welterweight

By Joe Santoliquito

James Page knew the temptations were always there on the streets. Cars, gold chains and bracelets, fine women. They all surrounded Page, and for a brief time in his life, Page bit. And bit. And bit. He had no real direction, besides maybe an aborted career as an amateur boxer. His appetite for things he couldn't afford landed him in jail three times, but then a numbing chill came over him while watching a boxing match on TV during one of his stays in the slammer.

There on the screen was a picture of what could have been. An old friend, Emmett Linton, had just won a bout on a nationally televised show and his arm was being raised in victory. There was Page, sitting in the county jail wondering what path to take with his life. *That should be me*, Page thought. Page remembered what it felt like to win in the ring, the one place he was successful.

Time passed, and Page finally kept a promise to himself. Instead of ending up a statistic or back behind bars again, he got a chance to show the world how good he is with his crushing, second-round knockout of Andrei Pestriaev in Bercy, France, on October 10. It was a victory that may alter the landscape of the welterweight division.

The rangy 5'11" Page, 22-3 (18), has tremendous power, able to fold an opponent like an envelope with one of his devastating left hooks. It was a left hook in the first that sent Pestriaev to the canvas for the first time in his career, and another that finished him off in the second. The shot caught the WBA's number-one contender flush and turned him into a ceramic statue before he landed with a sickening thud.

"Being locked up did change my life," Page, 27, admitted. "What happened was it gave me a lot to think about. I started to think of what I wanted to do with my life. Did I want to continue being a screw-up, or try boxing and see where it takes me?

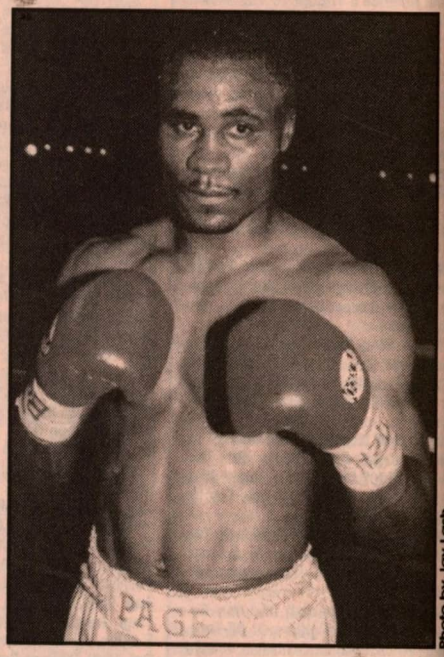

Photo by Joy Lash

"A lot of my friends are dead. I have close buddies, and a lot of them are in prison for life. I'm lucky, blessed, you know. Being in jail wasn't scary. You have a lot of your buddies in there with you who you were running the streets with. It wasn't some place I wanted to be for the rest of my life though. A lot of the guys I was with went back in, they're doing hard time. Being in prison made me a lot more disciplined, in the sense of staying focused and knowing what I wanted to do and what I wanted to be."

After beating Pestriaev, Page did not know exactly what he was: a champion or still a contender.

(Continued on page 60)

PRO RECORD

1990		
Dec. 12	Luis Silva, Concord, CA	KO 1
1991		
Jan. 15	Rick Basler, Reno, NV	KO 1
Jan. 31	Sergio Alonzo, San Jose, CA	KO 2
March 2	Frank Lopez, San Jose	KO 2
June 21	Jesus Magana, San Jose	KO 1
Aug. 6	Peter Waswa, San Francisco	W 6
Oct. 2	Hector Pena, Concord	KO 6
Nov. 15	Zack Padilla, San Francisco	L 6
1992		
May 1	Damon Franklin, Stockton, CA	KO 1
1993		
April 29	Danny Perez, Irvine, CA	W 10
July 16	Augustine Renteria, San Mateo, CA	KO 3
Oct. 22	Steve Johnston, Santa Cruz, CA	L 8
1994		
March 25	Rod Sequenan, Las Vegas	W 8
May 19	Jose Minez, San Jose	KO 3
1995		
March 6	Alfred Ankamah, Inglewood, CA	KO 1
June 29	Alberto Alcaraz, Concord	KO 2
Oct. 27	Genaro Leon, Concord	KO 2
1996		
Feb. 25	Ross Thompson, Las Vegas	W 10
June 23	Jaime Balboa, Houston, TX	KO 3
Aug. 9	Robert West, Bay St. Louis, MS	L 10
1998		
Feb. 21	Bill Bradley, Miami, FL	KO 1
April 3	Luis Carmona, Bayamon, Puerto Rico	KO 3
May 29	Eric Alexander, Las Vegas	KO 5
Aug. 29	Anthony Perry, Las Vegas	KO 6
Oct. 10	Andrei Pestriaev, Bercy, France	KO 2

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DREW	KOs
25	22	3	0	18

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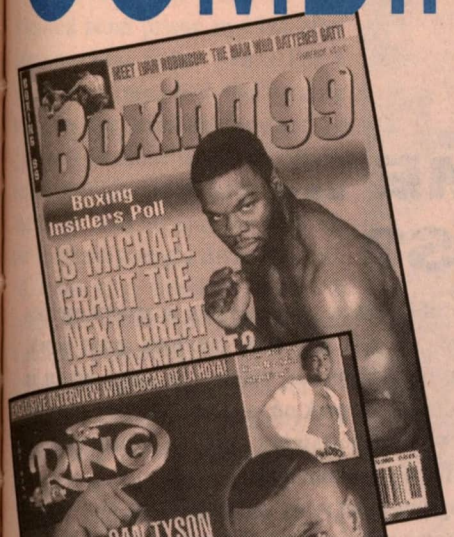

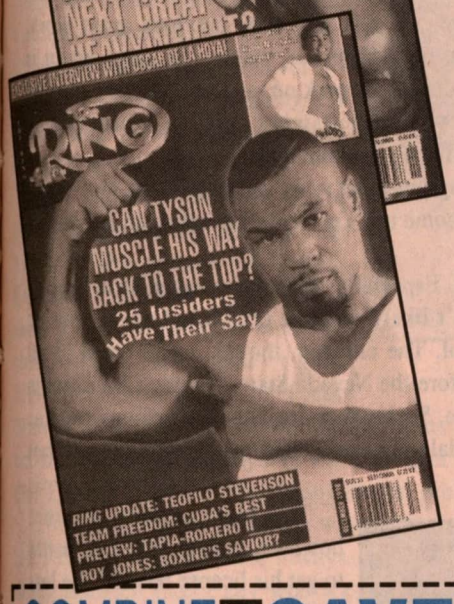

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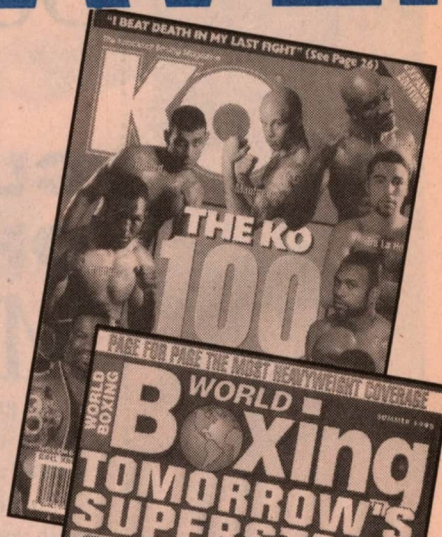

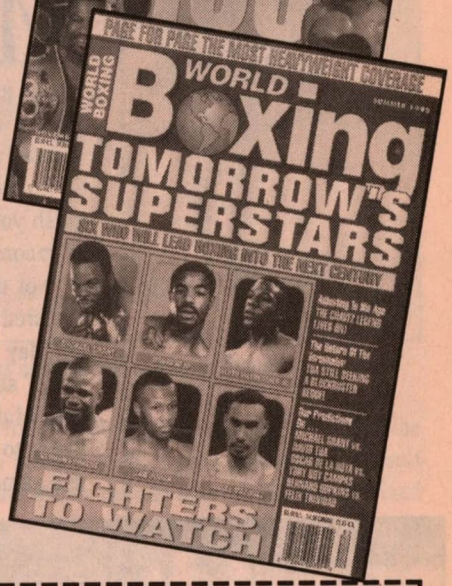

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RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

CURTAIN TIME ... OR CURTAINS?

Mike Tyson's comebacks are like the tours of old rock stars. No hits in recent memory, no guarantee of delivering some new gem that will rival previous great work, and no disguising the fact that the prime motivation for walking on stage again is lots of green paper. Yet, the arenas fill up, the media critics perk up, and the industry gets an always-welcome adrenaline rush. And, heck, they *are* entertaining. You've heard of Rod Stewart unplugged? During his last tour, we got Mike Tyson unhinged.

So all you diehard Tyson fans can quit stomping your feet now, sit back down, and extinguish your lighters. The house lights still haven't come on. Your hero has returned for another encore.

Not that there was much doubt that he would. Especially after those psychiatric reports declared that Tyson, though a little screwy, wasn't likely to chew off Mills Lane's bow tie one day or smash any opponents with a ring stool. The clincher, though, came when "Iron Mike" showed up for his reinstatement hearing before the Nevada State Athletic Commission with Muhammad Ali and Magic Johnson at his side. Seeing that, the Nevada honchos were as likely to reject Tyson's request as Baby Jake Matlala is to reject Michael Grant's jump shot in a game of one-on-one.

"Hi there, I'm gonna give it one more try"

The big question for me, however, is this: Will that battle to get his license back be the last truly big fight Tyson ever wins?

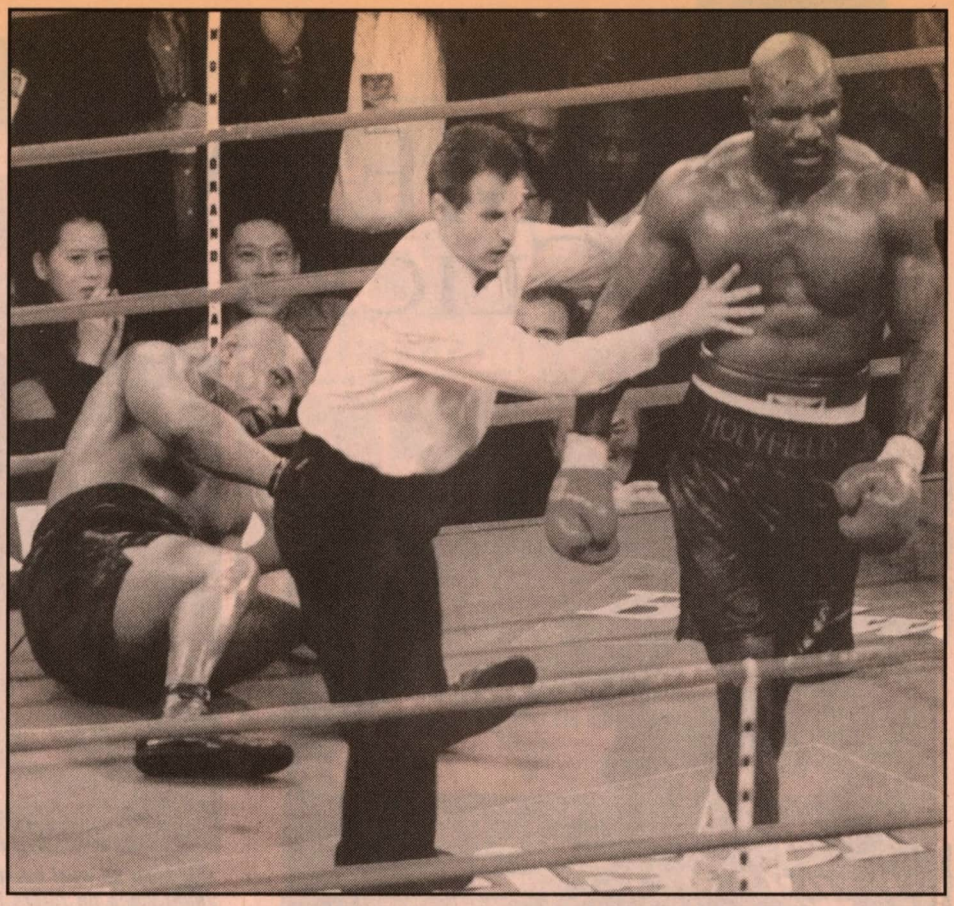
The recent claim of promoter J Russell Peltz that Tyson would lose to everyone rated in the top 10 is absurd. A long-ball threat like Tyson is always a tough out, even if he has lost his menacing aura. (Guy-next-door Oscar De La Hoya doesn't scare anyone, but when he hits you solidly, you're still in serious trouble.) In fact, if Tyson's opponents are no longer intimidated by him, they may be more aggressive and willing to trade with him, and that's a situation the ex-champ would certainly relish.

But let's skip the technical stuff. My doubts about Tyson's chances for great success have more to do with what's inside

his head than how well that head can slip Grant's jab or duck Lennox Lewis' right cross. I'm talking about Tyson's apparent loss of confidence and desire, and his rearranged priorities.

It troubled me when he was released from prison in 1995 after serving just three years for a heinous crime. But the boxing buff in me looked forward to Tyson II because it was an opportunity for the powerhitter to end the parity and become the dominator the heavyweight division needed. Ironically, although this latest comeback doesn't disturb me from a moral standpoint—Tyson received a proper punishment for his ear bite—it sure isn't making my heart race or my mind conjure exciting scenarios.

Sure, a shootout with Grant would be interesting, and squaring off with the winner of Lewis-Evander Holyfield seems like a natural, but we probably won't be cheated out of any nights of great historical significance if Tyson decides after his first tuneup that he wants to quit boxing to become a Showtime analyst or a pro wrestler. Not if my hunch, that Tyson's heart isn't in this any longer, proves correct.



How good can Tyson be more than two years after his first loss to Holyfield?

Though he had to watch his words during his exile because the Nevada neckties were always listening from afar, Tyson never sounded like a guy who was dying to get back to kick some ass and repair a ring reputation that once meant everything to him. When is the last time, even pre-suspension, that you heard him talk about, or saw him try to imitate, the legends? For years, that had been his obsession. While he was on the shelf, Tyson even considered retirement. Does that sound like a man on a mission?

There's some speculation that Tyson wouldn't even be coming back if his finances were in the kind of shape one would expect they'd be in following two $30-million paydays. But the money-grabbing alphabet organization most on I-Earn Mike's mind these days is the IRS, not the WBA, WBC, or IBF, because he reportedly owes Uncle Sam $13-million. And unless your name is Joe Louis, the IRS forgives debts about as often as the Geneovese crime family.

It isn't all that surprising that the previous motivations don't cut it for Tyson anymore. Driving nosebones through brains? Nobody will care if the bashed beaks belong to Obed Sullivan and Shannon Briggs. Becoming the unified champion? Well, after the Holyfield-Lewis superfight takes place in early-'99, Tyson will find himself having to dethrone either "The Real Deal," against whom he twice had no clue how to win, or the Briton, a tall jabber good enough to have beaten Tyson's conqueror. Not exactly appealing choices. As for the desire to go down in history, well, Tyson guaranteed himself wall space in Canastota over a decade ago, when he pulverized Michael Spinks in 91 seconds.

Turbulence in Tyson's personal life always served as rocket fuel, but with the homefront seemingly tranquil since his marriage to Dr. Monica Turner, he can't conveniently rely on that nobody-loves-me rage that once put bad intentions in every punch. Can he find the rage somewhere else? In light of the suspension, negative headlines, and humbling before the Nevada commission, it will be interesting to see what happens the next time Tyson is the victim of dirty tactics the referee ignores. Victimized fighters have to do something—albeit not ear-biting—to level the playing field and earn their rival's respect. But will Tyson now be hesitant to retaliate illegally? If so, what edge will that give his foes? And if he does get down and dirty, will he be disqualified quicker than someone else would?

For me, this latest return of "Kid Dynamite" is somewhat intriguing, but not nearly as much as the last comeback. This time, there's a better idea of what to expect: a lethal weapon that just might have deprogrammed itself, and consequently has as much chance of missing its prime targets as it does of hitting them.

Sit back in your seat. The curtain is rising. The tour is underway.

Break a leg, Mike. That's just a figure of speech, by the way, not a recommended strategy. ■

CAMERA CLICKS

Photo by Teddy Blackburn

Fighting a real stiff: Either Angel Manfredy's going out of his way to find easy opponents, or this particular guy went over the line in his attempts to cut weight. "El Diablo" was surely anticipating much more of a live challenge from his actual next opponent, Floyd Mayweather Jr.

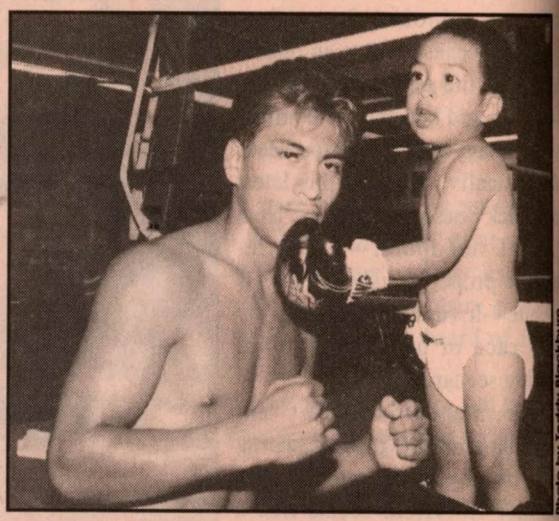


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

This must be what basketball announcer Dick Vitale is talking about when he refers to a prospect as a "diaper dandy." Undefeated New York bantamweight Emmanuel Lucero found gloves that fit his son, Emmanuel Jr., but he has to work on finding the youngster snugger trunks.

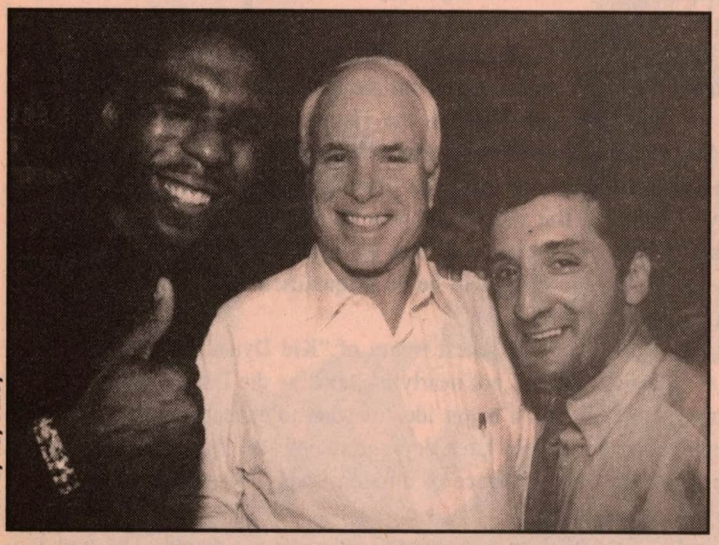
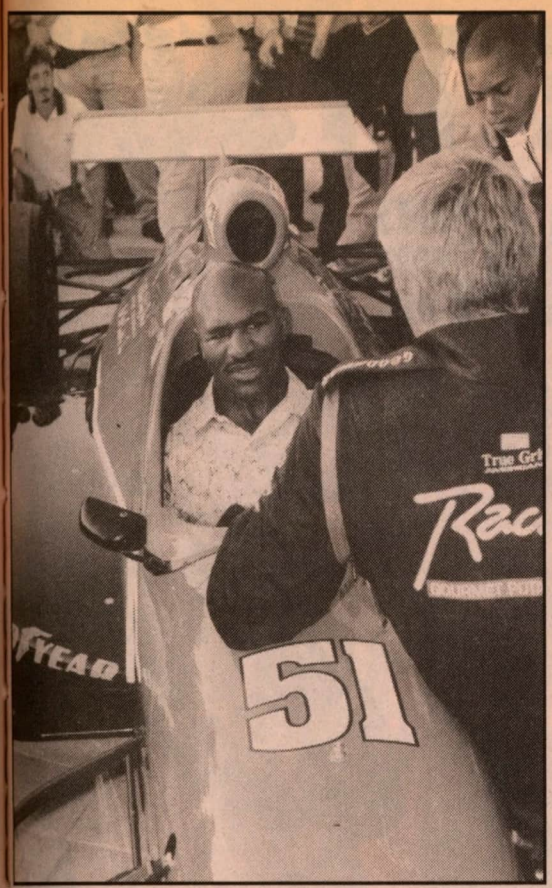


Photo by Ray Bailey

Then-IBF super middleweight champ Charles Brewer is doing the politically correct thing by palling around with Republican Senator John McCain and Pennsylvania State Boxing Commissioner Greg Sirb. "The Hatchet" knows it never hurts to have friends in high places.

Photo by Ray Bailey

Big girls, they do cry: Kathy Collins seems to sense she's getting the short end of the stick as the scorecards are being read after her upset loss to Leah Mellinger in September. It was the first defeat of the junior welterweight's career, and she clearly didn't take it too well.



Just like the old ship-in-a-bottle trick, you kind of have to wonder how Evander Holyfield managed to fit through the narrow opening of this race car. The champ's arm movement was so constricted, he felt like he was fighting Henry Akinwande.

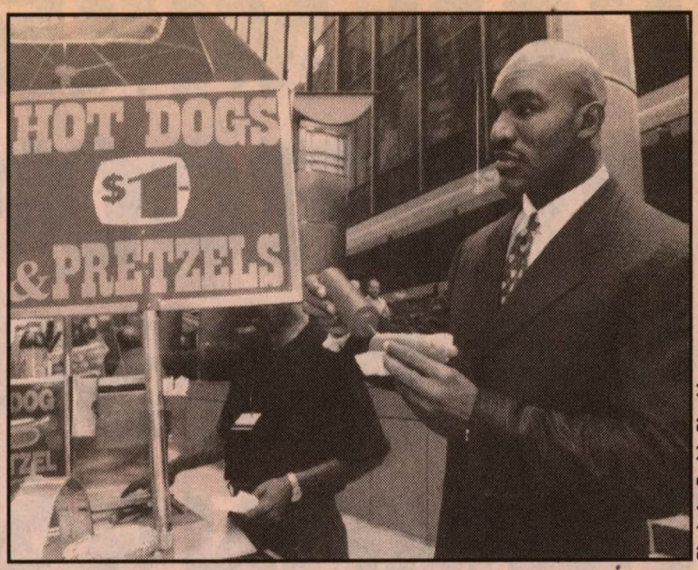
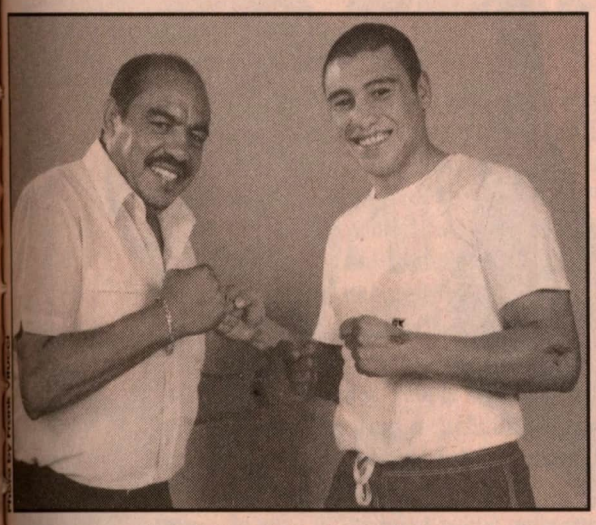


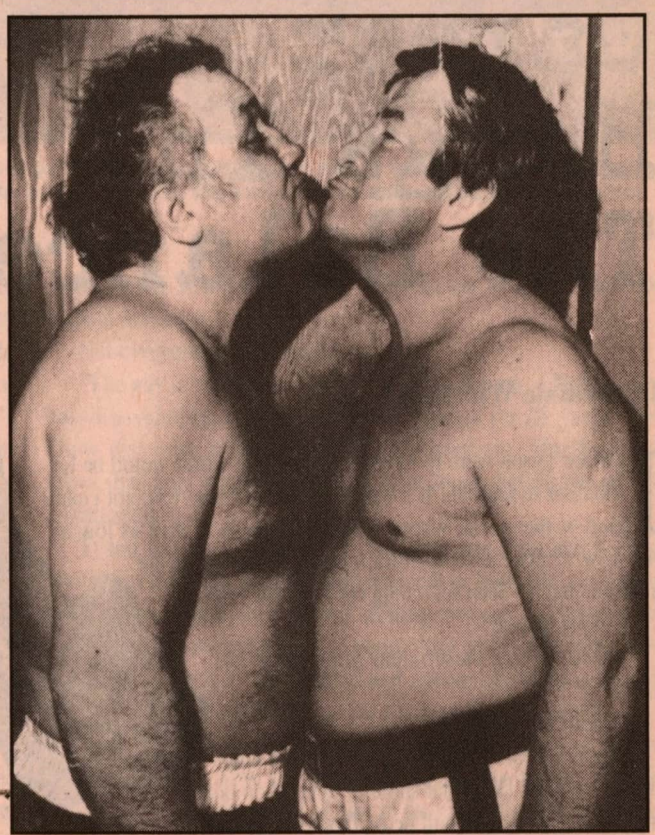
Photo by Teddy Blackburn

Aha! At last we know the secret to "The Real Deal's" tremendous physique: a steady diet of New York street vendor hot dogs. Holyfield does have three losses on his resume, but most of the time the WBA/IBF champion comes out a wiener.

NOSTALGIA CORNER



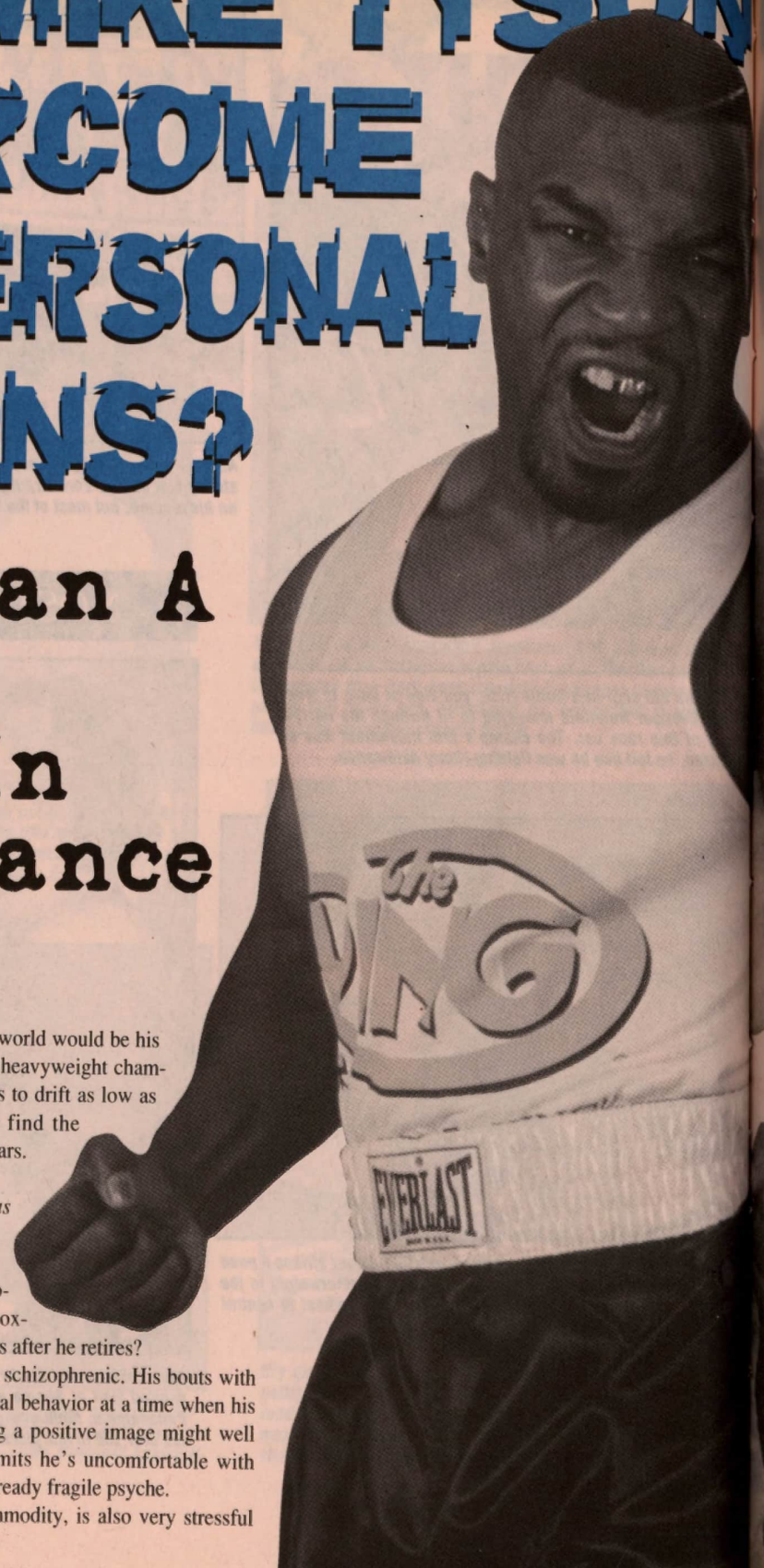
Power-punching welterweight contender Jose Luis Lopez strikes a pose with ... Jose Luis Lopez. Jose Sr., a professional featherweight in the '60s and '70s, trains his son in the ring, and does his best to control the notoriously wild surfer outside the ropes as well.



Jake LaMotta and Rocky Graziano might both be Hall of Famers, but they sported Hall of Shame stomachs for their 1972 exhibition benefit bout in Philadelphia. Middleweights in their prime, the boyhood pals both looked a tad over 160 in this picture—but neither one seemed to mind.

CAN MIKE TYSON OVERCOME HIS PERSONAL DEMONS?

More Than A Career Hangs In The Balance



By Johnnie Whitehead

If Mike Tyson were to have it his way, the world would be his shoulder to lean on. It's where the former heavyweight champion of the world, whose self-esteem tends to drift as low as Andrew Golota's bodyshots, could finally find the approval he has been searching for all these years.

Violins, please.

Nobody knows the troubles Mike Tyson has seen.

Nobody knows his sorrow …

Tyson appears to be at wits' end. Is he emotionally stable? Does that stability depend on boxing? And if so, where will he be five to 10 years after he retires?

In his present state, Tyson comes across as schizophrenic. His bouts with depression, violent mood swings, and anti-social behavior at a time when his career could have depended on him presenting a positive image might well indicate a bleak psychological future. He admits he's uncomfortable with fame, which only compounds matters for his already fragile psyche.

"Fame, while it's a really sought-after commodity, is also very stressful

Photo by Jason Ross Lavin

Even with the ring full of security guards, Tyson continued to rage after he was disqualified for twice biting Evander Holyfield's ears. Whether or not he's mentally stable enough to box again remains a matter of opinion.

because there are no longer any boundaries," said Dr. Toni Leonetti, founder and president of Human Potential International. "It's only natural. Many famous people are uncomfortable with that part of it. It elevates the level of stress and depersonalization. People who are in that position find it difficult and need some professional help to still retain their self-worth and self-respect."

In spite of his latest public outbursts, a report by a team of six doctors, released October 13, declared to the Nevada State Athletic Commission that Tyson is fit to return to the ring, despite that two doctors said Tyson snapped at them in separate instances and indicated a "wish" to harm one of them at one point.

"However, at no time did this evaluator feel physically threatened or endangered," Dr. David Medoff, who was interviewing Tyson at the time, wrote to the lead physician, Dr. Ronald Schouten.

Not everyone is convinced.

"The guy is not stable," said Dr. Ronald Kamm, a New Jersey-based psychologist who has treated athletes for 25 years. "We know that from what happened in Gaithersburg, Maryland. We know that from what happened in New Jersey before the athletic commission."

Tyson has been accused of punching one man and kicking another in the groin after a traffic accident in Maryland on August 31. Although Tyson has denied striking anyone, his lawyers are trying to settle the matter out of court. And who could forget how he reacted angrily to the detailed and intense questioning in New Jersey when he initially tried to get a license to fight again?

If Tyson can't handle the questions that are asked of him by commissioners, how can he possibly handle the even more demanding questions asked of him in the ring? The first two times he was severely tested, he was knocked out by Buster Douglas and Evander Holyfield. On the third occasion, he didn't wait. He knew he didn't have any answers. He resorted to what Kamm called "classic prison behavior" when he bit chunks from Holyfield's ears in 1997.

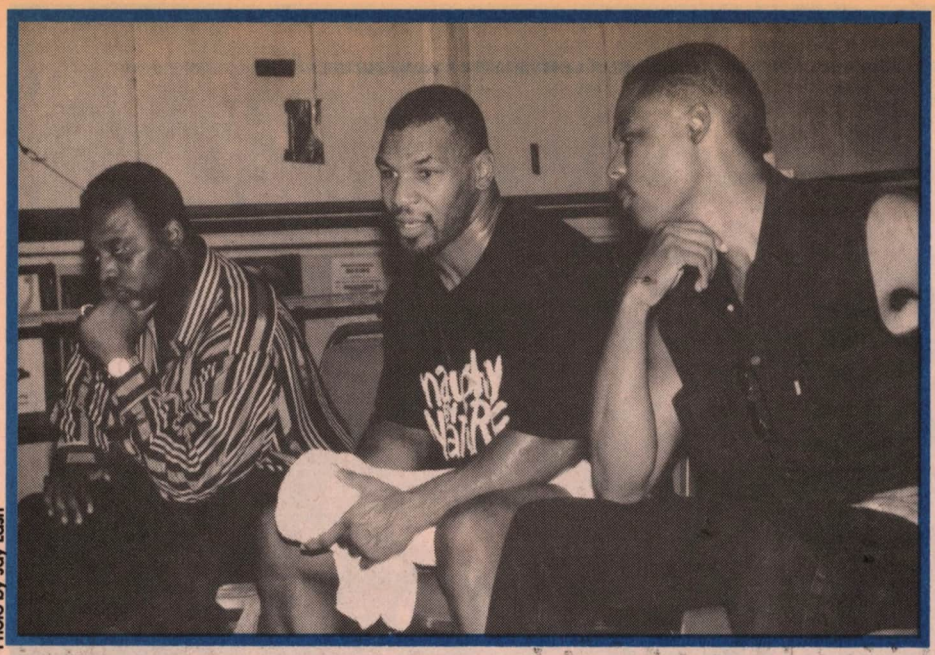


Photo by Jay Lash

Tyson had an opportunity to get a fresh start after being released from prison, but he chose to stick with the same old crowd, including co-managers Rory Holloway and John Horne.

The psychiatric report that was delivered to the Nevada commission raised questions amid its answers. As Kamm points out, the report determined that Tyson does not need medication to treat his condition, but needs "regular psychotherapy" about once a week.

"Even though they say he doesn't need medication, that's pretty intensive for someone who [according to the report] doesn't have a problem," said Kamm, who thinks medication shouldn't be ruled out so quickly.

Being a boxer makes Tyson's anger problem even more sensitive.

"With a boxer, you're dealing with someone who has the ability to be aggressive and extremely violent," Kamm said. "I don't know if [the doctors who examined Tyson] know boxing. Boxers are different. Boxing was one area where he could show some mastery. Holyfield took that away from him."

Reading between the lines, it seems Tyson does not want to fight again. Every time he has a chance at vindication, he punches himself in the mouth. Why else would he bare his deepest and most disturbing thoughts in a boneheaded interview with *Playboy* shortly before the commission voted on his reinstatement. As he told the magazine, "I expect the worst to happen to me in my life. I expect that one day somebody will blow my brains out." Or what about this gem: "I know I'm going to blow one day ... I'm just really angry these days. Really, really angry."

Tyson's lead attorney, Jim Jimmerson, must've choked on his corn flakes the morning that hit the newsstands.

"That's a real cry for help for people who have that inner feeling," Leonetti said. "He should continue to be evaluated for that to stay in touch with a support system. Medication can be vital to reestablish the chemical balance that is lost."

"If he's telling us all he's going to do this, we'd be idiots not to see it coming," added clinical psychologist Robert R. Butterworth, Ph.D.

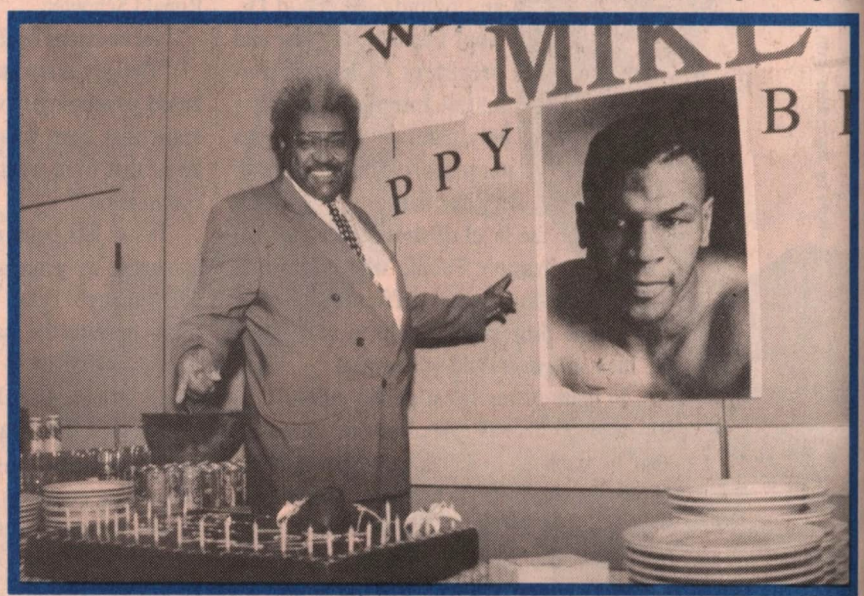
"It could be he's doing that—unconsciously—on purpose. He really doesn't want to fight," concluded Kamm.

Tyson, who has taken antidepressants such as Zoloft, has been reaching out for help for 32 years. According to the report: "Tyson's changes from normal mood to anger seem to be triggered by his belief that he is being used, victimized, and treated unfairly. When this occurs, he becomes defensive and uses his anger to push people away. These mood shifts are responsive to intervention, structure, and clear expectations."

But does that mean he's a loon?

"Crazy is if he thought he's a man from Mars," said Butterworth. "He's not crazy. He doesn't have the ability to hold back his rage. He has a severe emotional problem. In a sense, though, you've got to admire his honesty."

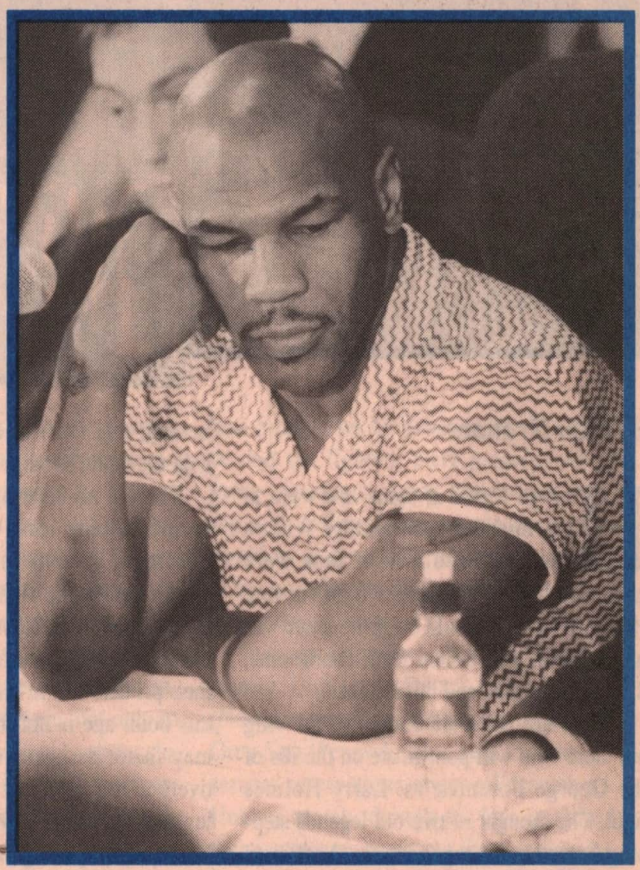
Maybe disillusioned is a better word. This is the same man who declared that during his four-year prison stay for rape all he did was read books (yet he failed to make the grade for his GED). He also said that he'd become a much more humble and worldly man, no longer full of the anger and love for material wealth that had landed him behind bars. He said that he found spiritual guid-



Maybe Tyson returned to Don King because the promoter threw a birthday party for him while the fighter was in jail. Whatever the reason, Tyson now alleges that King systematically defrauded him of tens of millions of dollars, and is looking to sever all ties with the promoter.

Photo by Chris Farina

Always in the spotlight. The Nevada boxing commission grilled Tyson (above) for six hours in September before ordering him to undergo rigorous psychological testing. The doctors deemed Tyson fit to fight.



ance and inner peace. But when was the last time he has openly praised Allah, especially in the animated fashion he displayed after knocking out Frank Bruno?

Tyson was so convinced of his new beginning that he conned himself. Still, upon his release from prison, he continued to run with the same old dogs—Don King, John Horne, Rory Holloway, foul-mouthed Crocodile, et al, and has been flea-infested ever since. While Tyson openly expressed his desire to change and his distrust of the parasites around him, they fed his self-destructive, me-against-the-world appetite, and he didn't have the emotional strength to break away.

Apparently, nobody on Team Tyson cared enough or had the capacity to help him deal with the demons that trouble him. Maybe Tyson should have known better. But maybe he's too lost to understand his predicament. Whatever the story, the bottom line is that he's a shell of his former self and he's facing a reported $13-million IRS lien. Now he has more attorneys (and fees) than hangers-on. It's enough to tip any sane person off-balance.

Tyson's former handlers, Bill Cayton and the late Jim Jacobs, realized the need to keep him active. The structure and repetition didn't allow him to deviate, and kept him focused. In the 10 years since that link was severed, Tyson's behavior has deteriorated. And if Jimmerson's take on his client's psychiatric evaluation is actually sincere, he should consider undergoing five days of testing, too.

"I was very pleasantly surprised," Tyson's lawyer told the *Las Vegas Sun*. "This is a hard-hitting report, and it's a favorable report. It shows he's not suffering from any psychological disorders, and it deems him to be mentally fit."

Sorry, Jim, but let's be realistic and get something straight. Tyson is a head case. He admits it. The doctors admitted it, though their conclusion is inconsistent because it tries to serve both interests. The question is, at his rate of deterioration, how low will Tyson sink if he reaches age 40?

"Sonny Liston," snapped Kamm.

Sounds crazy? Let's hope. ■

Johnnie Whitehead, a sports writer for the Orlando Sentinel, is a frequent contributor to this magazine.

THE FOREMAN-HOLMES CONTROVERSY

Better Late Than Never

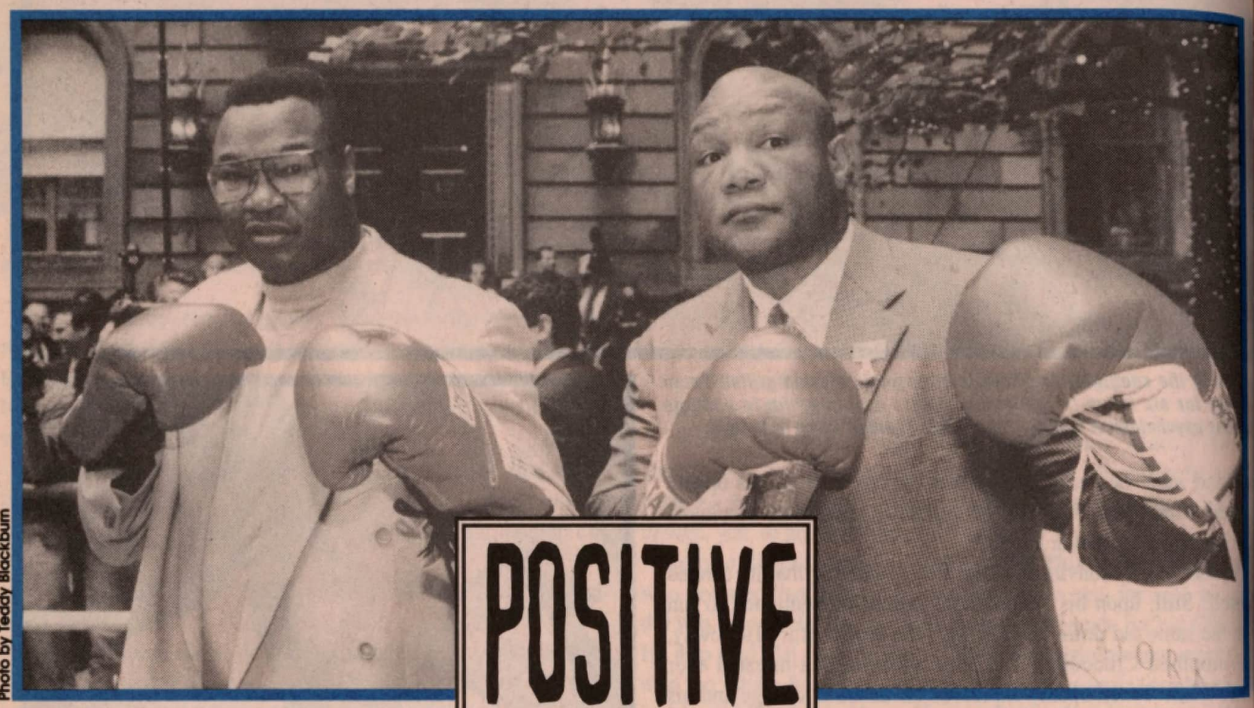


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

By Tim Graham

Heaven forbid if some life were to get injected into boxing. What a shame it would be if fans were given the chance to watch a fight for fun. How offensive it would be if the sport was blessed with a diversion from courtrooms, drug suspensions, and mismatches.

There are some defenders of the ring out there who will pontificate on the ills of the George Foreman vs. Larry Holmes fight. The thought of two old legends stepping between the ropes makes them sick. They claim there is no room in boxing for such a carnival freak show.

Quite the contrary. The January 23 fight between Foreman and Holmes at the Houston Astrodome, billed as "The Birthday Bash," has merit. And compared to some of the other atrocities going on in boxing, this fanciful event could actually help the game's image.

There's no denying that both of these former champions are over the hill. Foreman, 76-5 (68), will turn 50 two weeks before the fight and Holmes, 66-6 (42), turned 49 in November. It is blatantly obvious these grandfathers are way past their primes. But in analyzing the worth of this bout, age is not the issue. In fact, age may factor as positively as it does negatively in the equation. Golf fans accept the legitimacy of Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer competing on the Senior PGA Tour. Tennis fans still relish matches between John McEnroe and Jimmy Connors. They take the events for what they are worth: just-for-fun exhibitions, a chance to relive some glory days.

Foreman vs. Holmes takes that concept much further. While Nicklaus and Palmer and McEnroe and Connors have faced each other dozens of times both in their primes and afterward, Foreman and Holmes have never fought. The two could have fought in 1976, but Holmes broke his thumb against Big Roy Williams. Foreman instead took on Dino Denis and knocked him out.

Anyone with even a modicum of boxing intelligence knows that the sport thrives on "what ifs." What if Muhammad Ali fought Joe Louis? What if Jack Dempsey battled Jack Johnson? What if Mike Tyson took on Sonny Liston? What if Holmes hadn't broken his thumb?

It wasn't too long after Foreman—six bouts removed from his epic "Rumble In The Jungle" loss to Ali—first retired in 1977 that people wondered what would have happened if he had stuck around for a

(Continued on page 61)

Boxing Sinks To A New Low

By Ed Maloney

The scheduled George Foreman vs. Larry Holmes bout is a sick, perverted joke. It may be hard to believe, but there was a time when the notion of two middle-aged men boxing under the sanction of a state commission was preposterous. But we now live in a Jerry Springeresque world where the abnormal has indeed become normal. Foreman, who in the past two years has plodded through fights with clubfighters Crawford Grimsley, Lou Savarese, and Shannon Briggs, and Holmes, who split with Brian Nielsen and Maurice Harris, are set to square off in January at the Astrodome in Houston.

Legally, they have the right to do it. But just because something is legal doesn't mean it's the right thing to do. There are maximum-age limits for joining the armed services and police and fire departments, even though there are certain tasks in those fields that middle-aged men could perform with ease and without being placed in danger. For the greater good of society, however, these bans have been upheld in courts.

It would be much better if the Foreman-Holmes fight didn't take place, not only to save the sport from such an ugly spectacle, but to also diminish the potential for disaster. Studies show that the chance of serious injury accelerates from the early-30s on, and the punches each will absorb in the bout will further increase the likelihood that one or both men will eventually suffer from Punch Drunk Syndrome, Parkinson's disease, and/or Alzheimer's disease.

Defenders of the modern seniors tour will say that in some cases, brain disease was brought on by questionable lifestyles or that the fighters were predisposed to those conditions. Again, they're not dealing with reality. Some people are predisposed to liver or lung diseases, but alcoholics and chronic smokers are more likely to get those diseases.

In recent interviews, four state commissioners, Dick Cole (Texas), Larry Hazzard (New Jersey), Marc Ratner (Nevada), and Greg Sirb (Pennsylvania), said they had no serious reservations about a Foreman vs. Holmes match, though all four qualified their statements by saying the sanction was dependent upon both men undergoing—and passing—rigorous physical and mental tests. Their concern for the fighters' health and safety, balanced against the position the states must take as defendants in age discrimination lawsuits was understand-

(Continued on page 64)

TAKING THE EASY WAY OUT

HAS QUITTING BECOME ACCEPTABLE?

By D.E. Thomas

Quitters never win, but winners sometimes quit, at least in professional boxing. That's the way it seems, especially lately, when taking the easy way out has become an ever-available option to the pugilist who finds himself in a situation where things aren't going his way. Take, for example, the unsettling occurrences that happened recently in a two-week span in Las Vegas, where two men who had been among the sport's most successful and courageous warriors decided to punch out early rather than take another punch.

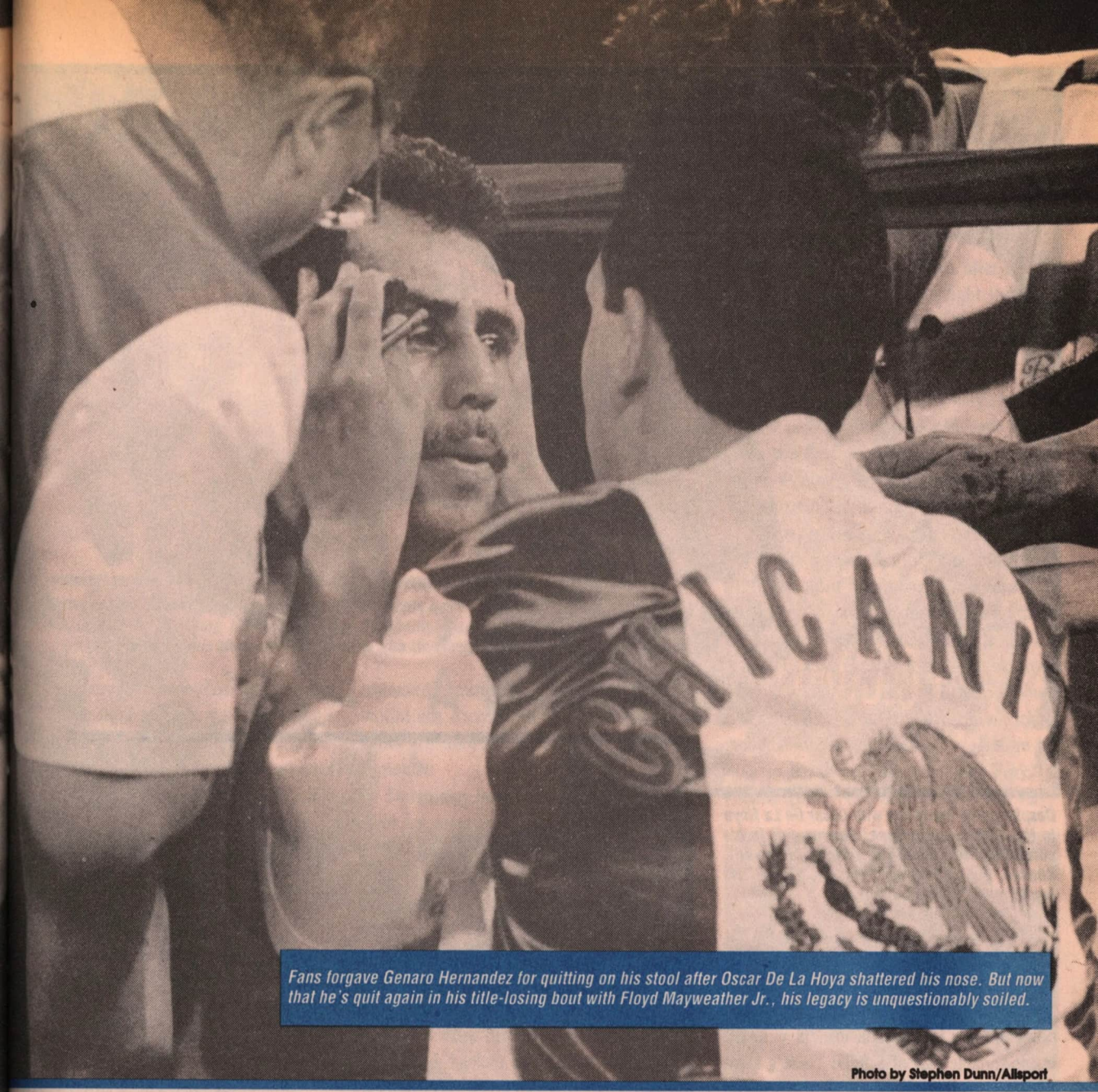
Julio Cesar Chavez turned back the clock in his rematch with Oscar De La Hoya with a performance that recalled his glorious prime in an effort to defy the odds and reverse the result of his first meeting with the WBC welterweight champion. Over the first seven rounds, the man who had won six versions of world championship belts in various weight classes over the course of a 100-victory career showed his best form in years. He brought the audience to its feet when he went toe-to-toe with "The Golden Boy" in the final minute of the eighth round, taking everything in the young champion's arsenal and responding with grit, even though he took three blows for every one he landed.

It seemed for a moment as if Chavez had made a determination to walk through De La Hoya's best shots and try to take his foe's heart through sheer willpower. It turned out, however, that Chavez had made an entirely different decision. Instead of going for broke, he quit on his stool rather than answer the bell for the ninth round.

Two weeks later, Genaro Hernandez, a 15-year veteran who had tasted defeat just once in 40 pro fights, pitted his savvy against the flash of brash young prospect Floyd Mayweather Jr. in defense of the WBC super featherweight championship. Hernandez soon found his hands full as he was gradually overcome by Mayweather's speed and skill. The younger fighter answered his every move with a non-stop attack, landing volleys of combinations and neutralizing Hernandez' attempts to turn things around. With his right eye swelling and having lost practically every round, the defending champion elected to throw in his own towel, also after the eighth round.

The two quitters explained their actions in different ways. Chavez opted for denial. He told his cornermen his ribs were injured, but later changed his story and said his corner stopped the fight due to a badly cut lip, despite videotaped evidence that his handlers had implored him without success to continue. Hernandez took an honest approach, saying, "I didn't want to stop the fight, but there was no sense to keep getting hit the way I was."

It would have taken only a quick exami-



Fans forgave Genaro Hernandez for quitting on his stool after Oscar De La Hoya shattered his nose. But now that he's quit again in his title-losing bout with Floyd Mayweather Jr., his legacy is unquestionably soiled.

Photo by Stephen Dunn/Allsport

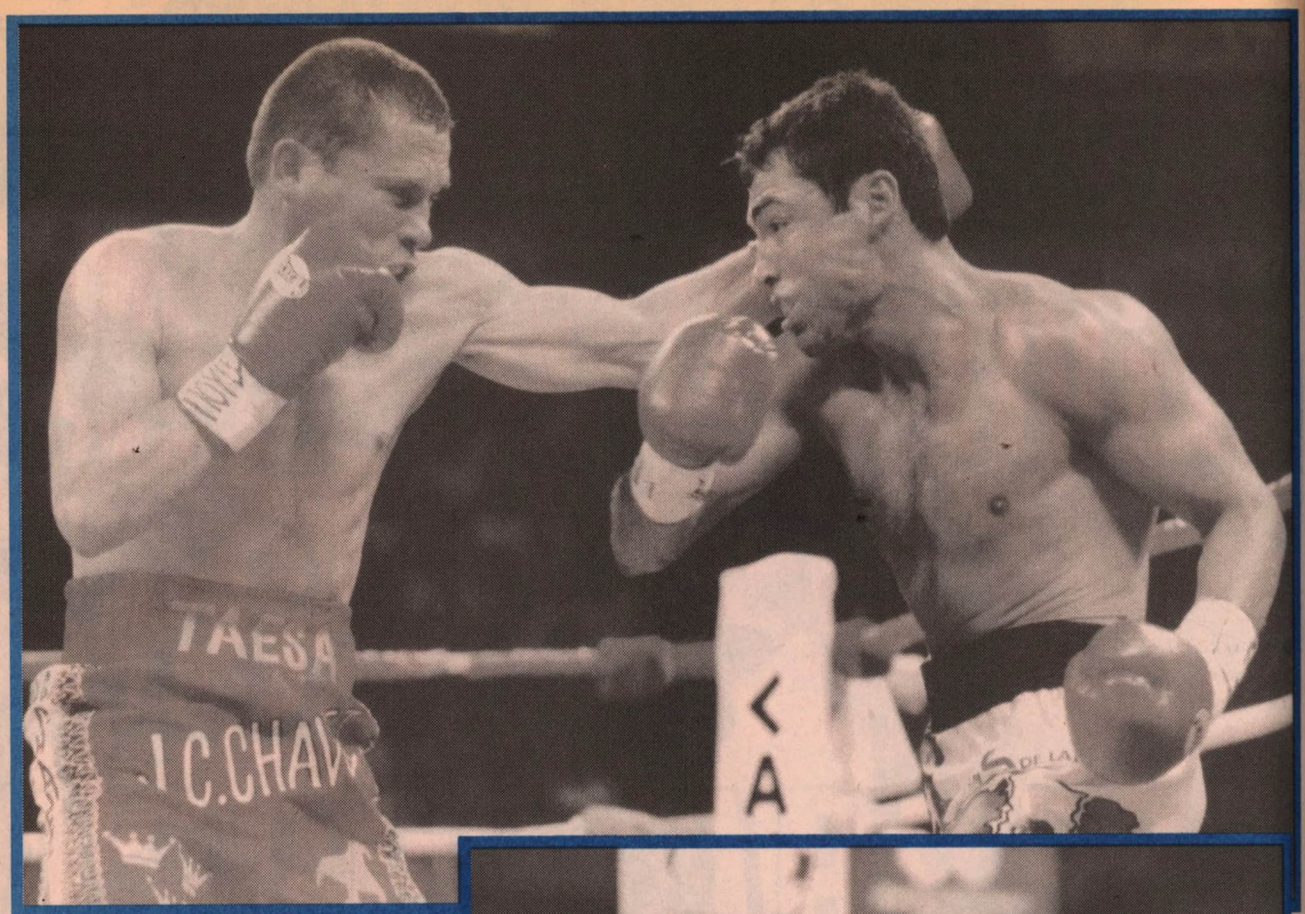
nation of the backgrounds of Chavez and Hernandez to see this coming. Chavez basically called a halt to his rematch with Frankie Randall in May 1994 after he was cut by an accidental headbutt, refusing to continue and putting the outcome in the hands of the judges, who awarded him with a controversial technical decision victory. Hernandez had suffered his only previous defeat when he retired on his stool after De La Hoya shattered his nose with a left uppercut in September 1995. Hernandez had gained a measure of redemption three fights later by electing to continue after he was knocked down with an after-the-bell punch thrown by Azumah Nelson. He could have taken the easy way and won via disqualification, but decided to box on, and eventually won a decision victory. But against Mayweather, he reverted to form and ran up the white flag.

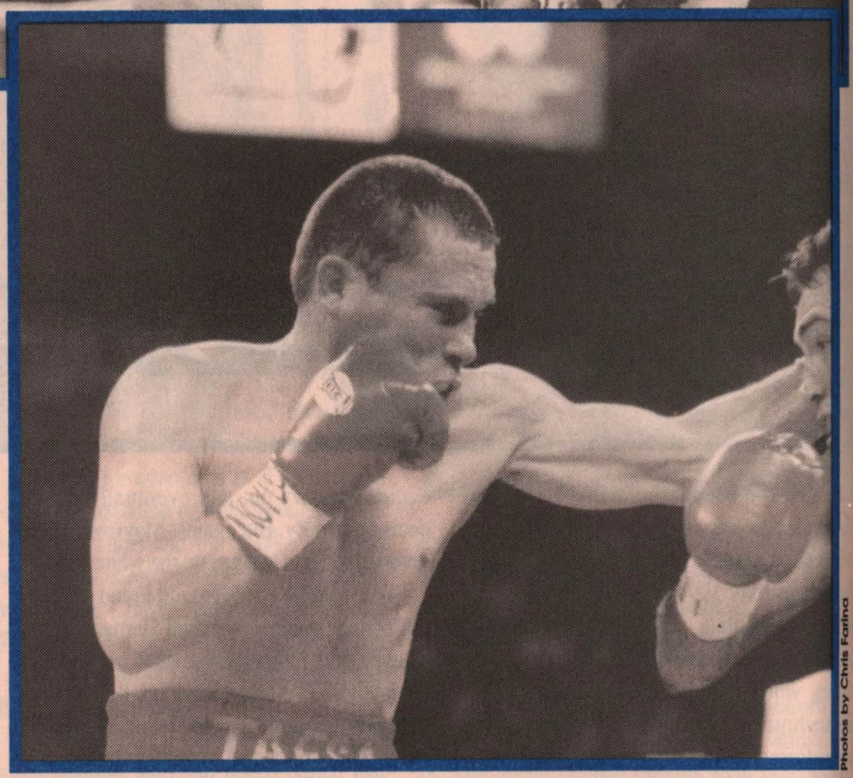
Teddy Atlas, the Sigmund Freud of modern boxing trainers, watched Hernandez and Chavez and remembered what his mentor, the late Cus D'Amato, used to tell him when he drove around his old Bronx neighborhood, which produced more than its share of mobsters.

"Cus used to say in the old days, wiseguys and gangsters, when they were coming up and wanted to make their mark, would take all kinds of chances," Atlas said. "They would do anything. But once they made it, they would kind of lose their nerves. Now they were afraid of dying. Now it didn't have to be that way. Similarly, when a fighter gets to a certain point in his career, accumulates success, and is satisfied that he's proven what he has to prove, sometimes the will to go through that again is just not there. They can find an excuse in their mind [to quit]."

Atlas thinks he has settled on a formula to predict when an accomplished fighter will quit in the ring. It takes a certain combination of factors, starting with a boxer who has reached a certain stature and has experienced his share of success in the ring.

"You see almost none of it in the experienced guys who are still winning, still prospering," noted Atlas. "It's when they are very experienced, but they are at a point in their





Photos by Chris Farina

Despite going toe-to-toe with Oscar De La Hoya in the eighth, Julio Cesar Chavez quit in his corner at the end of the round. Afterward, Chavez, his lip badly cut (inset), blamed his capitulation on his cornermen.

lives where they're past their prime. They have to have a large sum of success, but they have to be heading for the other side. By that point, there's less reason to deal with the uncomfortable part of a fight. There's room for them to have options. Options breed weakness. They are in a position in their life where it's easier for them to give in to something that's unpleasant."

Before quitting, Atlas said, the fighter will always make a last-gasp effort to pull out a win. Where Chavez battled on to nearly the last second of a brutal fight before pulling out a victory over Meldrick Taylor, he accepted defeat as soon as it was clear De La Hoya had his number. Of course, Chavez was younger, fresher, and still at his peak when he rallied back to stop Taylor. But passage of time and the wear and tear of the ring have apparently drained the Mexican idol of much of his resolve, and he's no longer willing to keep going when the going gets tough.

While certainly not a new phenomenon, quitting seems to be on the rise in recent years. It wasn't always that way, however. There was a public outcry and even a congressional investigation when Sonny Liston retired on his stool to lose the heavyweight championship to Muhammad Ali in 1964, and Roberto Duran's "No Mas" loss to Ray Leonard in their 1980 rematch was a major news item around the world. By contrast, few seemed to take much notice when Chavez and Hernandez failed to go down fighting.

There are lots of ways to quit a fight, and some boxers have proven themselves more creative in the art of the easy exit than others. Heavyweights, it seems, quit on their own terms. In recent memory, Mike Tyson's dis-

Former heavyweight champion Sonny Liston tried to explain away his surrender to Muhammad Ali in their first fight by claiming his left shoulder had been injured, but only the most gullible believed his story, despite this show-and-tell session with Dr. Alexander Robbins.

graceful disqualification loss to Evander Holyfield in their rematch was obviously a case of a fighter doing whatever it takes to get out of the ring. His ear-biting may have been directed as much at referee Mills Lane as it was at the heavyweight champion, a plea to call a halt to the bout in order to save him from the humiliation of a second knockout loss to Holyfield. Bobby Czyz claimed to be blinded by a foreign substance when he quit against Holyfield, but commission officials failed to substantiate his claim after an investigation that included checking Holyfield's gloves. Czyz never adequately explained his actions, but later apologized for casting aspersions on a honorable fighter.

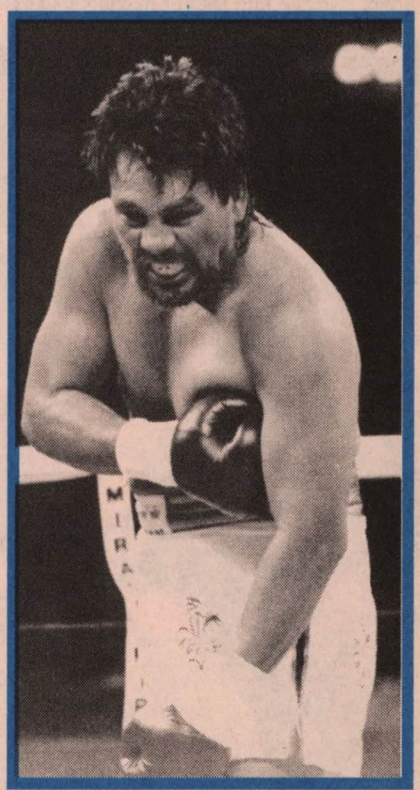
Henry Akinwande and Oliver McCall suddenly found themselves wanting to be somewhere else when faced with power-punching Lennox Lewis in two other bizarre heavyweight title fights, and each found his own distinctive way out. Akinwande turned octopus, wrapping up Lewis with his long arms at every opportunity, until he was finally disqualified after repeated warnings. McCall didn't cry wolf. He simply cried and refused to put up a fight as Lewis stalked him and landed at will. He was implored to join the fray, but continued his strange behavior until a technical knockout was awarded to Lewis because McCall refused to defend himself. Even Andrew Golota's two disqualification losses to Riddick Bowe, where Golota threw away sure victories by repeatedly punching low because Bowe would not succumb to his legal punches, could arguably be called a creative way to surrender.

Duran may have been personally responsible for ushering in the new generation of quitters when he turned his back in the eighth round of his second fight with Leonard. Duran stuck to his story of stomach cramps as an excuse for his action, and eventually won back most of his reputation with title-winning efforts against Davey Moore and Iran Barkley. But let's not forget that Duran quit again when he waved off his 1991 non-title match against clubfighter Pat Lawlor, claiming he was debilitated by a shoulder injury.

Liston was vilified after quitting against Ali. He claimed a shoulder injury, but public opinion was split on two other possible explanations for his capitulation. Some felt he was giving in to avoid the inevitable after discovering that the young challenger's speed and reflexes were just too much to overcome. Others felt he took a dive, either to cash in on a fix (the odds were 7-1 in Liston's favor) or because unsavory characters had made him an offer he couldn't refuse. The congressional inquiry did little to shed any light on the matter, nor did a rematch a year later, which Liston lost again in questionable fashion after going down from the infamous "Phantom Punch" in the first round.

Sometimes a legitimate injury is enough to convince a fighter to give up and live to fight another day. Hernandez was probably justified in calling it quits against De La Hoya, as was Frenchman Marcel Cerdan, who retired in the 10th round of his 1949 middleweight title defense against Jake LaMotta after suffering an injury earlier in the fight that rendered his left arm useless. Cerdan fought on with one arm at his side, but finally gave in to the futility of the effort.

Examples like those only serve to contrast the courage of fighters who have fought on in the face of adversity, win or lose. Henry Armstrong once swallowed blood until winning by knockout after a referee threatened to stop a fight because of a cut that nearly severed his lip. Victor Galindez won the vacant light heavyweight championship in '74 when he shook off a leg fracture to stop Lee Hutchins. Even though he ultimately lost, Derrik Holmes got up from seven knockdowns after Wilfredo Gomez split one of his teeth in half with a wicked shot that also fractured his jaw. Before he became heavyweight champion, Pinklon Thomas gutted out a decision win over Jerry

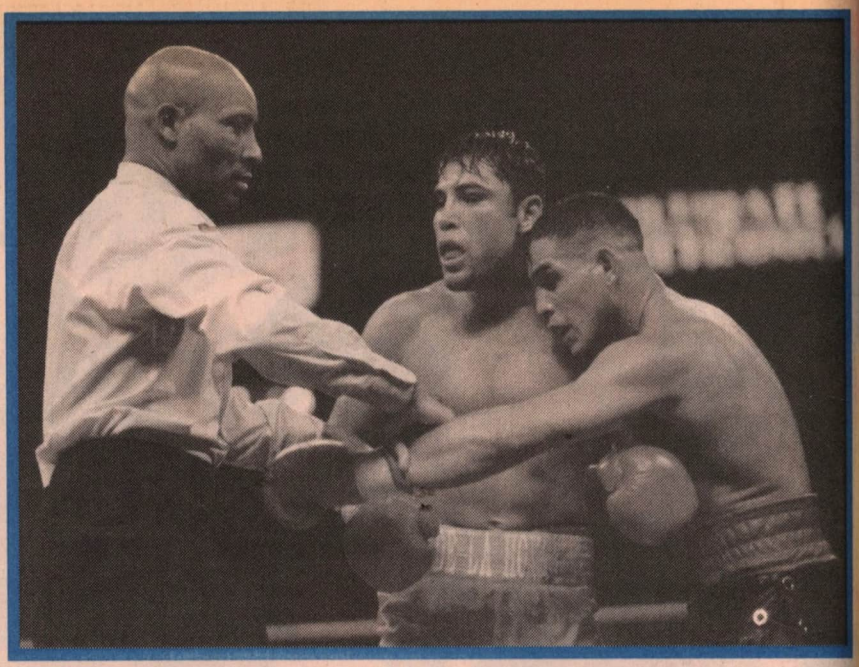


Once a quitter, always a quitter. Everybody remembers Roberto Duran's "No Mas" against Sugar Ray Leonard, but let's not forget he also quit in his 1991 fight against clubfighter Pat Lawlor.

Williams despite breaking both hands early in the fight.

Chavez and Hernandez are far from the first fighters to display courage on an inconsistent basis. John "The Beast" Mugabi waged a brutal war with Marvelous Marvin Hagler before losing by 11th-round knockout in 1986, but quit in the third round later that year when Duane Thomas fractured his eye socket in a bout for the vacant WBC 154-pound title. When Mugabi turned his back on Thomas and leaned over the ropes, he got no sympathy from his former conqueror, Hagler, who was doing television commentary on the fight, and wondered out loud, "What's wrong with his other eye?"

Compare Chavez and Hernandez to Hector Camacho, a fighter many consider undeserving of his "Macho" nickname because of his hit-and-run style. Still, three times Camacho has found himself severely overmatched in recent years. Against De La Hoya, Chavez, and Felix Trinidad, Camacho had every reason to find a way out of the ring, but he instead turned to his survival skills, took his beating, and lasted the distance in one-sided losses. Some might criticize him for not making a stand that could have resulted in a knockout defeat, but Camacho at least gave it an honest effort rather than make an easy exit.



Even though he is often criticized for his run-and-grab tactics, Hector Camacho refused to quit against De La Hoya, despite taking a one-sided beating. "The Macho Man" also hung tough in losing fights against Chavez and Felix Trinidad.

These days, fighters don't have to worry as much about the consequences of their actions. Hernandez entered the ring against Mayweather secure in the knowledge that he had a lightweight title shot coming against Cesar Bazan, regardless of the outcome. And a few days after quitting against De La Hoya, Chavez filed a formal request for an opportunity to face the winner of the Kostya Tszyu-Miguel Angel Gonzalez fight once they settle matters for the vacant WBC super lightweight championship. It's a lot easier to quit when you know you can continue to prosper.

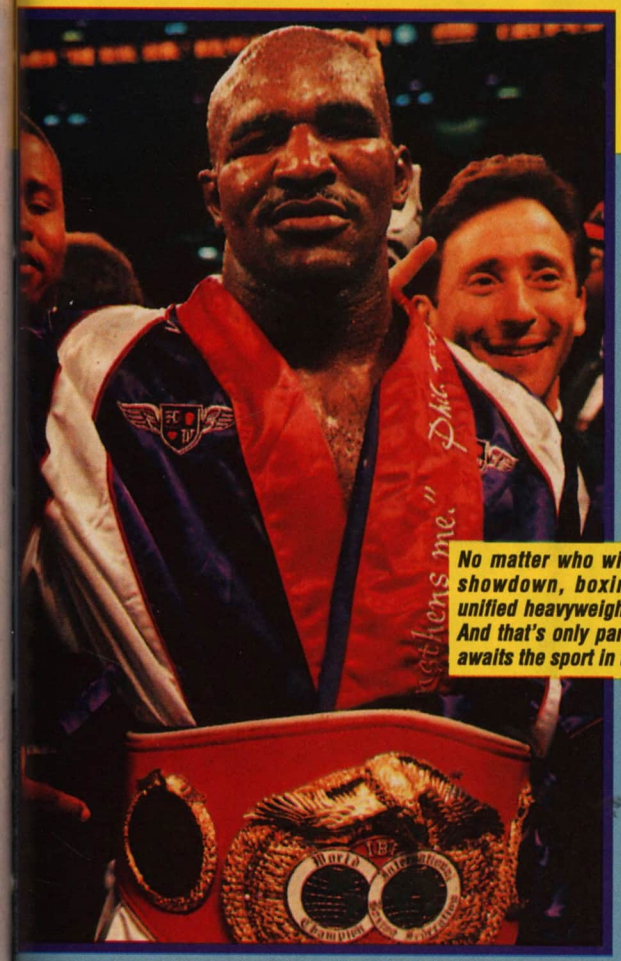
Hernandez' eye swelling was nowhere near as bad as that suffered by Carmen Basilio in his second fight with Ray Robinson. But Basilio kept going the entire 15 rounds, while Hernandez ran up the white flag.

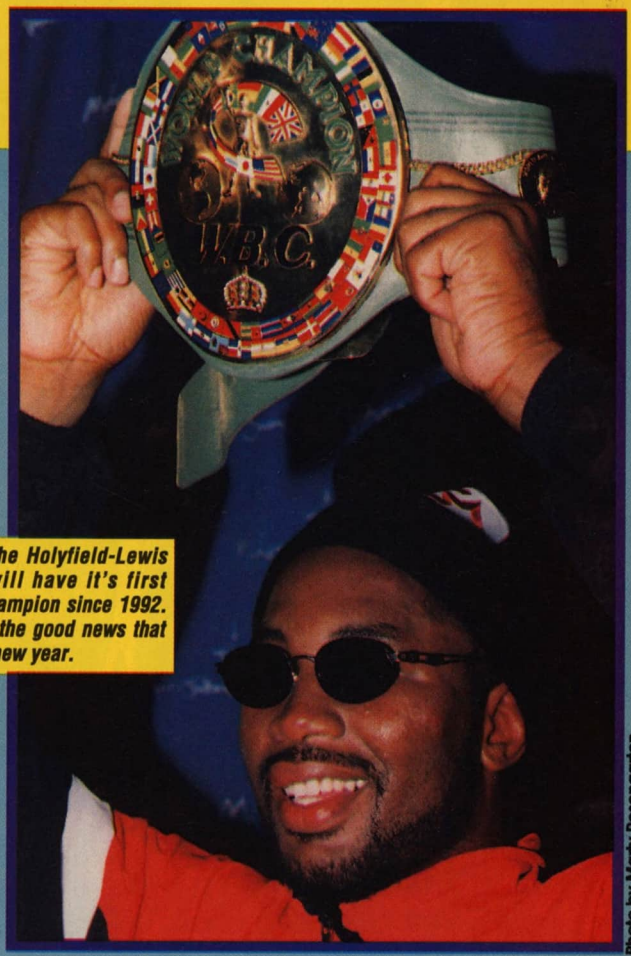
Ultimately, it comes down to pride. Ali, well over the hill, never asked for mercy when Larry Holmes pounded him along the ropes round after round. Vinny Pazienza didn't look for excuses when Roy Jones was treating him like a heavybag. Rene Jacquot was knocked out in round one by Mugabi, but attempted to fight on one leg after badly twisting his ankle in the opening seconds.

A fighter with heart can often overcome an opponent with better skill, speed, and power. The current trend is a sign of the times, a reflection of today's society. Quitting was virtually unheard of in the days of Armstrong, LaMotta, Carmen Basilio, and Gene Fullmer, when a fighter who surrendered was subject to scorn and ridicule, and quickly steered into another profession. As long as boxing exists, there will be always be genuine tough guys like Holyfield, Arturo Gatti, and Kennedy McKinney. These days, sadly, there is also room between the ropes for quitters. ■

10 REASONS

1999 WILL BE A GREAT YEAR FOR BOXING





No matter who wins the Holyfield-Lewis showdown, boxing will have it's first unified heavyweight champion since 1992. And that's only part of the good news that awaits the sport in the new year.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

By **Nigel Collins**

Okay, so 1998 wasn't the greatest year for boxing, but it sure ended with a flourish. It's funny how things go in cycles. Until the Ivan Robinson-Arturo Gatti war in August, '98 had been a bleak year, almost totally void of marquee matchups and exciting fights. Most of the major news stories came out of courtrooms, athletic commission hearings, and psychiatrists' offices. But the Robinson-Gatti brawl seemed to galvanize the sport into action, serving as a catalyst for a series of outstanding matches over the final third of '98. The best part is that the upward momentum should carry forward well into the new year. Boxing's on a hot streak; let's enjoy it while we can, and ride it for all it's worth. Here's 10 reasons THE RING *believes 1999 is going to be a knockout year.*

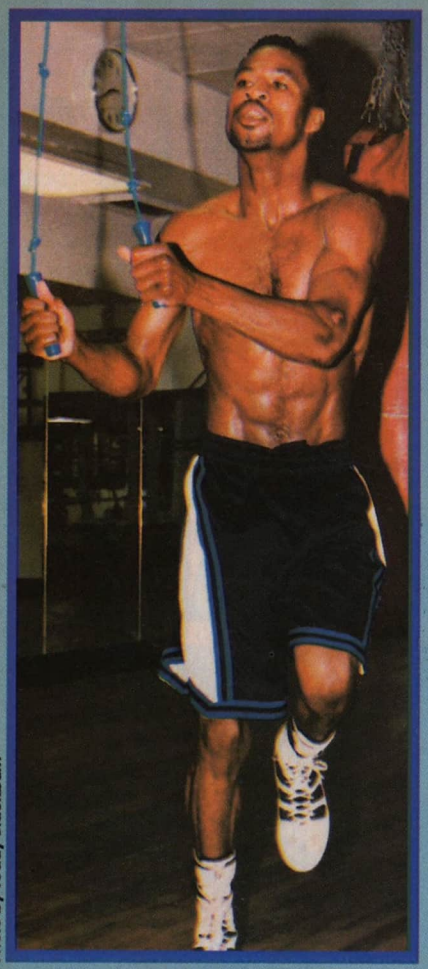


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

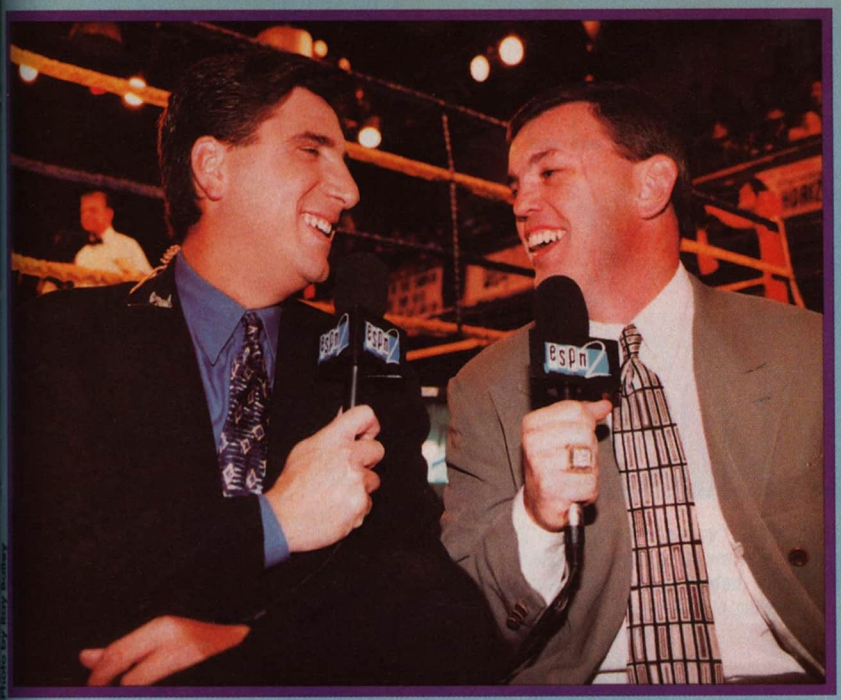
Sugar Shane Mosley hones his near-perfect physique in preparation for a star-making campaign in 1999. The IBF lightweight champion is already widely recognized as one of boxing's pound-for-pound best.

Fans can look forward to another year of thrilling wars on HBO's **Boxing After Dark**, *such as the August double header that featured Ivan Robinson's upset over Arturo Gatti (above) and Fernando Vargas' bloody TKO over Darren Maclunski (below).*

1. An undisputed heavyweight champion will be crowned: It doesn't matter all that much who emerges victorious in the upcoming unification match between WBA/IBF heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield and WBC counterpart Lennox Lewis; boxing is going to be the biggest winner. To everybody besides hardcore fans, the heavyweight division *is* boxing, and having an undisputed champion will help legitimize the game in the eyes of the mainstream. It will set the tone for the entire sport, hopefully encouraging the champions in all the other weight classes to follow suit. But even if that doesn't happen, just having one man atop boxing's most significant division will be a huge improvement over the fragmented situation we've endured since then-unified champ Riddick Bowe trashed the WBC belt in '92.

The fact that Holyfield-Lewis has all the earmarks of a classic encounter is a bonus, and if their showdown turns out to be the two-way slugfest many expect, it will encourage casual fans—those who only watch boxing once or twice a year—to tune in the next time the new undisputed champion fights.

2. The third coming of Mike Tyson: Views on what will occur during Tyson's latest comeback range from those who think he'll regain the heavyweight title to those who believe he'll get beaten by the first world-class fighter he meets. The one



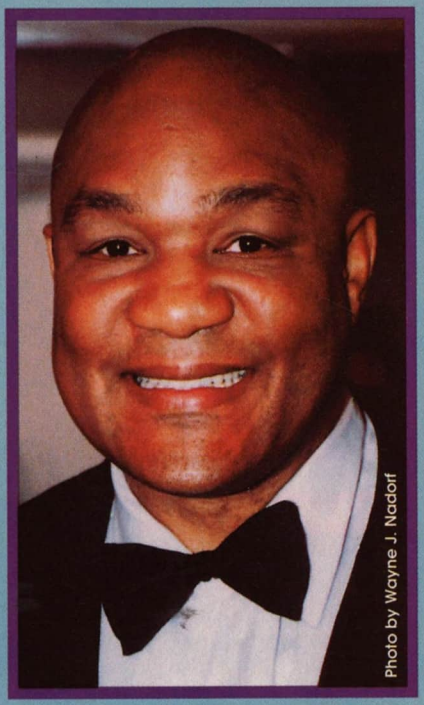
Bob Papa and Teddy Atlas are the ringside hosts for ESPN2's new **Friday Night Fights** *series. The weekly program features both live and vintage fights.*

thing that everybody agrees upon is that Tyson's return to the ring will give boxing a gigantic boost. No fighter since Muhammad Ali has captivated the general public to the extent Tyson has, and while his inside-the-ring impact might be short-lived, it will be enormous as long as it lasts.

At press deadline, it looked like Frans Botha would be Tyson's first comeback opponent. The South African is no Peter McNeeley, but unless Tyson has slipped further than even his severest critics think, he should get past "The White Buffalo" and pull down some monster pay-per-view numbers before reality, in the form of a competitive opponent, spoils all the fun. Not that we're advocating mismatches, mind you. It's just that Tyson's going to get some soft touches whether we like it or not, so the sport may as well enjoy all the exposure and revenue his comeback is guaranteed to generate while it can.

Then again, if boxing's baddest badboy has more fight left in him than most experts think, and is still capable of beating the best of the rest, he has the drawing power to singlehandedly carry the sport into the new millennium.

3. Marquee matchups in the super-talented welterweight division: To start, we've got Oscar De La Hoya's rescheduled showdown with Ike Quartey to look



We'll get to see living legend George Foreman lace 'em up one last time in '99.

forward to in February. From an economic point of view, it would be better if "The Golden Boy" wins, but whoever has his arm raised at the end of this intriguing match will make an ideal opponent for IBF welterweight champ Felix Trinidad. And the fact that "Tito" has finally broken away from Don King means that a match between the powerpunching Puerto Rican and the Quartey-De La Hoya winner has an excellent chance of being made.

But the Trinidad/De La Hoya/Quartey triumvirate is far from the be-all and end-all of the 147-pound class. At press time, left hook artists Jose Luis Lopez (who held Quartey to a draw in '97) and James Page (who recently annihilated Andrei Pestriaev) were scheduled to trade bombs in early-December in an effort to fill the vacancy left at the top of the WBA ratings when Quartey relinquished the belt in order to challenge De La Hoya for the WBC version. Once again, as in the De La Hoya-Quartey match, the winner of Lopez-Page will make a superb—and dangerous—adversary for any of the division's top guns.

4. The emergence of Sugar Shane Mosley as a genuine superstar: Undefeated IBF lightweight champion Mosley is another fighter scheduled to fight between this issue's editorial deadline and the on-sale date. But in Mosley's case, there's nowhere near as much doubt about the outcome as there is in the aforementioned bout between Lopez and Page, and there's no point in being diplomatic. If Mosley hasn't thoroughly thrashed Jesse James Leija by the time you read this, either the bout has been postponed or we've been radically off-base in our evaluation Sugar Shane. Pre-Leija, he seemed to have an excellent chance of developing into the finest all-around fighter since Ray Leonard commandeered boxing's most prestigious nickname.

True, Mosley is rapidly running out of viable challengers in the lightweight division, but that's okay because he'll soon be moving up to junior welter, where outstanding matches with IBF boss Vince Phillips and WBA titlist Sharmba Mitchell await.

5. An abundance of exciting new talent ready to blossom: Oscar De La Hoya isn't the vanguard of the new wave anymore. He's too old and too established for that now. There's a new crew of kids on the boxing block, invigorating the sport with their class and sass as they fast-track their way to the top. We're talking about multitalented fighters like Floyd Mayweather Jr., Fernando Vargas, David Reid, and Zab Judah. An ongoing influx of fresh talent is essential if boxing is going

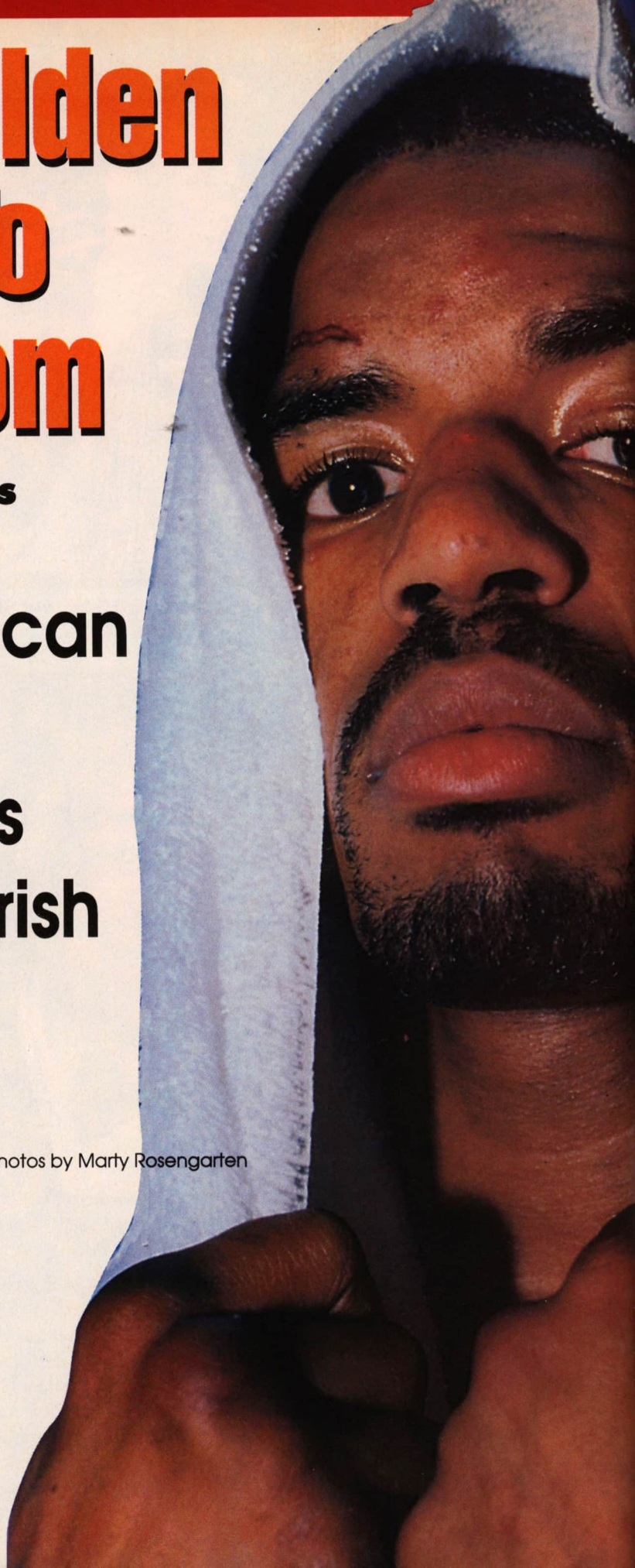
(Continued on page 55)

The Golden Road To Stardom

Eighth In A Series

"The American Dream" Overcomes A Nightmarish Opponent

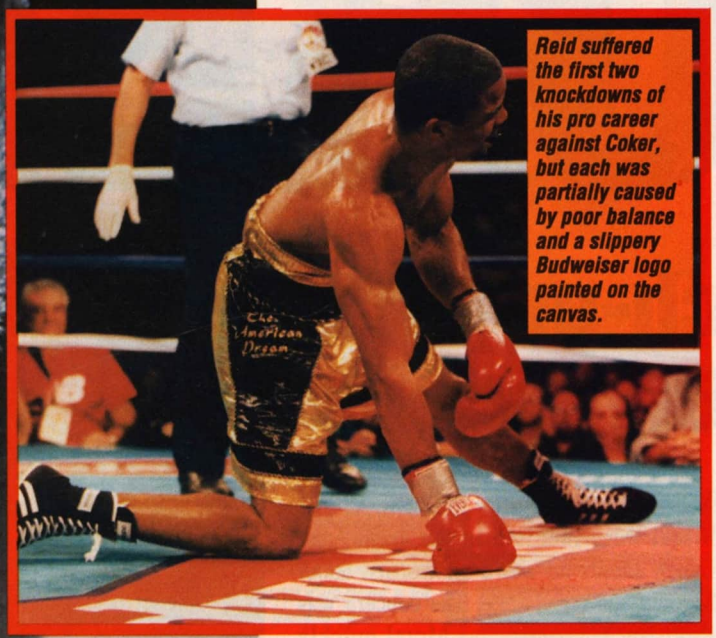
By Nigel Collins



Photos by Marty Rosengarten

There are three time-honored steps in achieving the American Dream. First, you have to start out an underdog; that's a given. Next, you have to strive mightily and take a lot of lumps and bumps along the way before taking the final step and arriving in that enchanted realm where dreams come true. Thanks to his multimillion-dollar contract with America Presents, David Reid, boxing's self-anointed "American Dream," has already reached the promised land at the bank. But he's still at the lumps-and-bumps stage in the ring.

Reid found lefthanded "Cowboy" Coker tough going, but his persistent pressure and greater punch output—217 punches landed, compared to 134 for Coker—allowed him to garner a 12-round unanimous decision.



Reid suffered the first two knockdowns of his pro career against Coker, but each was partially caused by poor balance and a slippery Budweiser logo painted on the canvas.

Reid attempts to explain to the media why he twice found himself on the canvas against Coker. Some skeptics believe his droopy left eyelid remains a serious handicap.

You could tell that by the way Reid looked at the end of his most recent fight, a 12-round unanimous decision over James "Cowboy" Coker at the Trump Taj Mahal's Mark G. Etess Arena in Atlantic City. Afterward, he faced the media across a ringside press table and tried to explain away the crooked gash halfway up the right side of his forehead and the fact that he'd been on the floor in each of the last two rounds. There was, of course, a perfectly plausible reason for every mishap that had happened on the way to his 11th pro victory. Still, it's unlikely that much footage from the Coker fight will find its way onto Reid's highlight video.

At best, the fight was a painful learning experience, a lesson that will pay off tenfold down the line. At worst, it was a peek into the future, an omen of more tough fights to come.

Reid's prior fight (on June 27) was his raucous Philadelphia homecoming, and worn-out old champ Simon Brown was pounded good and proper. But Coker was different. The Texan wasn't all used up like Brown; he was fresh, smart, rawhide tough, and most importantly, a savvy southpaw with a plan. He stood like an old-time fighter, sideways in a sort of modified Gene Tunney stance, and for much of the fight, the only targets he gave Reid were elbows, hips, and maybe the top of his head.

"Coker had a nightmare style. He's not trying to win, but then again he is," analyzed Al Mitchell, Reid's manager/trainer/guru. "People have to understand that southpaws give you trouble. A tall southpaw is double trouble. And a tall, disciplined southpaw will *really* give you problems."

And the previously undefeated Coker *really* gave Reid problems. But even so, Reid got the decision, and Coker's understandable protests notwithstanding, he deserved it. Judges Ron Greenley, John Poturley, and Paul Venti all scored the fight for the Philadelphian by respective tallies of 118-110, 119-111, and 117-111. THE RING also favored Reid, by a narrower 116-113 margin.

The demanding encounter presented Reid with a staggering succession of firsts: first cut, first knockdown (followed by second knockdown!), first 12-rounder,

(Continued on page 56)

JUNIOR BANTAM CONTENDER

ERIC MOREL

Playing Catch-up With His Fellow Olympians

By Robert Mladinich

When Eric Morel competed in the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, bad luck seemed to dog him at every turn. Besides the fact that he was not allowed to have his longtime trainer and mentor Bob Lynch in his corner because of dictatorial Olympic rules, he had the misfortune of drawing hard-punching Maikro Romero of Cuba as his very first opponent. Before he even had a chance to revel in the fact that he was representing the United States in the world's premier amateur tournament, Morel lost a hard-fought decision. Romero went on to win the gold medal, while Morel caught the next flight home to Madison, Wisconsin.

For the extremely emotional and immensely loyal Lynch, having to watch Morel fight from afar was difficult enough. Seeing him lose was something else. About 15 minutes after the bout, he and Morel were reunited in the arena, and Lynch admits he was a bit worried about Morel's emotional state. The concern was short-lived, however, as Morel quickly became the one consoling Lynch.

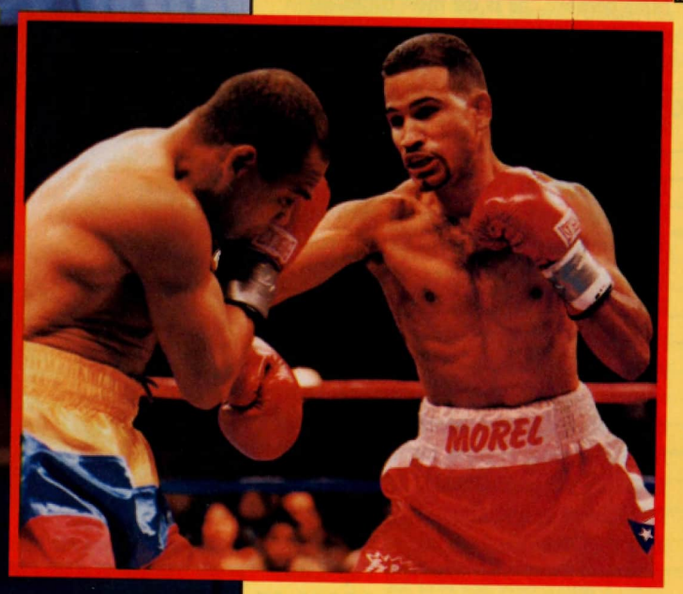
"It was a blind draw that Eric drew Romero first in the tournament," said Lynch. "Both of them were considered favorites to make it to the final round, so they should have fought each other further along in the competition. But Eric never complained about drawing him first, or even about losing. It was so obvious afterward how together he was emotionally. While he certainly doesn't like to accept losses, he handled everything like a real mature person."

Besides being ahead of his years on a mental and emotional level, from a strictly pugilistic standpoint, the 23-year-old Morel is wise beyond his years a well.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

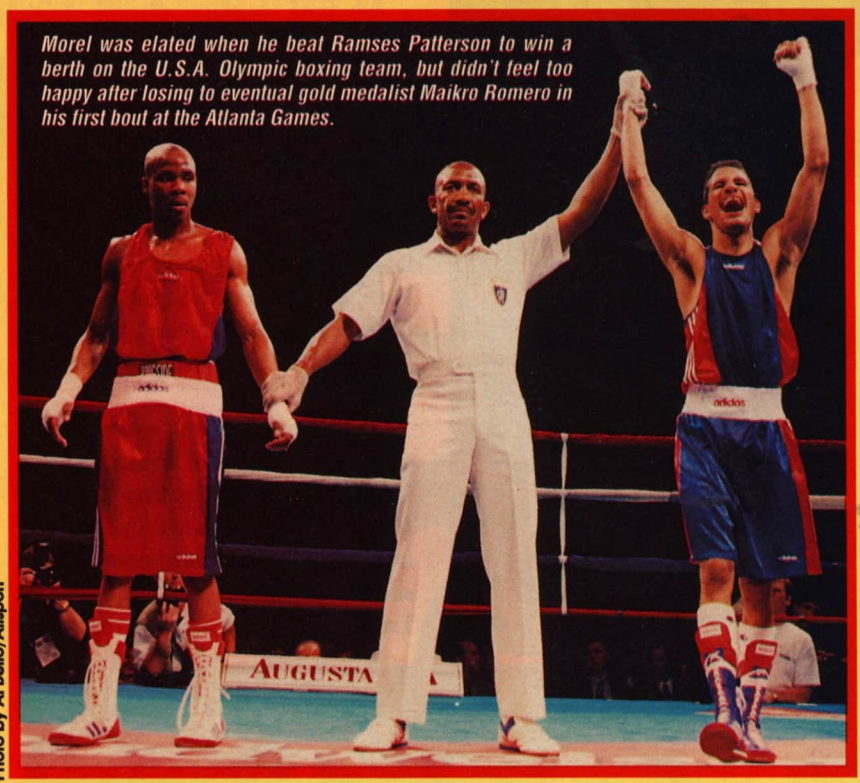
After displaying his formidable power by stopping former IBF junior bantamweight champion Rodolfo Blanco on September 25, he showed just as formidable boxing skills by scoring a one-sided unanimous decision over the very stubborn and resilient journeyman, Victor Burgos, less than one month later on October 17. Morel and Lynch were hoping the Burgos fight, which was televised nationally, would solidify his standing as a bonafide title threat.

While the 5'7" Morel, who is promoted by Top Rank, would love to challenge IBF 115-pound titlist Johnny Tapia, the fact that Tapia is promoted by Don King makes that bout extremely doubtful. In addition, there is heavy speculation that Tapia will be moving up a division full-



Photos by Marty Rosengarten

Morel surprised a lot of people by stopping rugged veteran Rodolfo Blanco, who had gone 12 rounds with IBF junior bantamweight champion Johnny Tapia six months earlier. A fight with Tapia is number one on Morel's wish list.



Morel was elated when he beat Ramses Patterson to win a berth on the U.S.A. Olympic boxing team, but didn't feel too happy after losing to eventual gold medalist Maikro Romero in his first bout at the Atlanta Games.

Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

time. If that occurs, Morel hopes to be in position to fight another top contender for the vacant crown.

"Because I believe in myself so strongly, I feel as if I could beat anybody in the world right now," said Morel, 18-0 (13). "If a title fight came along tomorrow, I would want to take it. Even if I had to go to Thailand, Japan, Bangkok, I would be willing to go. This is what I do. As a fighter looking for a title, if I have to go to the champion, that's what I'll do."

While Morel would most like to fight Tapia because "he is the most respected of all of them," he is extremely anxious to follow in the footsteps of his Olympic teammate, Floyd Mayweather, who dethroned WBC super featherweight champion Genaro Hernandez in October. The two of them have been charting a parallel course since Mayweather eked out a decision over Morel to win the 106-pound National Golden Gloves title in Little Rock, Arkansas, in '93. The following year, in Milwaukee, Morel won the 106-pound title, while Mayweather was crowned champion at 112 pounds. Over the years they have become pretty good friends, having traveled together to many international tournaments, as well as the Pan American and Olympic Games. Soon after the Olympics, both signed professional promotional contracts with Top Rank, and turned pro on the same card in January '97 in Las Vegas. The undefeated Mayweather won his first world title in his 18th fight, while Morel now finds himself standing in proximity of a title fight with an almost identical record.

"These guys are not exactly bosom buddies, but have been good friends over the years, and have a mutual respect for each other," said Lynch. "I don't think Eric can help but compare himself to Floyd. In many ways they are very similar. Eric sees the tremendous early success of Floyd, and he wants that, too."

"Eric has an incredible inner drive, and even asks for tougher fights so he can prepare himself for the championship," said Top Rank publicist Lee Samuels. "Nobody here thought he had the kind of power he has shown. He is the easiest kid on our roster to work with. Morel's management never turns down an opponent, and are always asking to be moved along quicker. You could give them King Kong and they would accept it. That's how much confidence they have in themselves."

Matchmaker Bruce Trampler has been the architect of Morel's pro career, and insists that Morel, like Mayweather, is talented enough to be fast-tracked to a title shot.

"Eric really took his career to another level with the Blanco fight," Trampler said. "It opened a lot of eyes to how good he is."

But turning an American fighter weighing less than 126 pounds into a premier attraction is no easy feat, even with a fighter like Morel, who has the added luster of being an Olympian on his resume. Still, it was Top Rank that was able to make Michael Carbajal into a million-dollar fighter for one fight (vs. Chiquita Gonzalez), and that opened the gates for boxing's little giants to at least regularly garner six-figure purses.

"Michael paved the way for all these

(Continued on page 57)

Morel, who earned the nickname "Little Hands Of Steel" as an amateur, punches his way to a points victory over Jesus Lopez in his seventh pro bout.

Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

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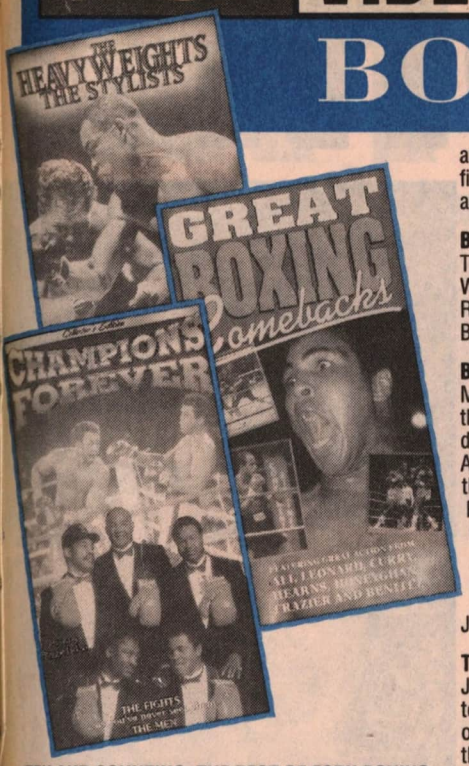

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RICHIE MITCHELL

The Ruffian Who Turned Boxing's Coming-Out Party Into A Brawl

By Pete Ehrmann

George Lewis Rickard was not normally an excitable man. His steely nerve had been honed on the American frontier and in the gold fields of Alaska in the final years of the 19th century. So for the man known as "Tex" to fairly froth at the mouth in Richie Mitchell's corner was decidedly out of character for the most successful promoter of prize fighting in the Roaring '20s.

"Is this the kind of talent you bring me?" the livid Rickard screamed at the men working Mitchell's corner.

Tex was referring to the fact that in the ring above them at Madison Square Garden, Mitchell was lying on the canvas for the third time in his January 14, 1921, match against lightweight champion Benny Leonard. And it was only the first round!

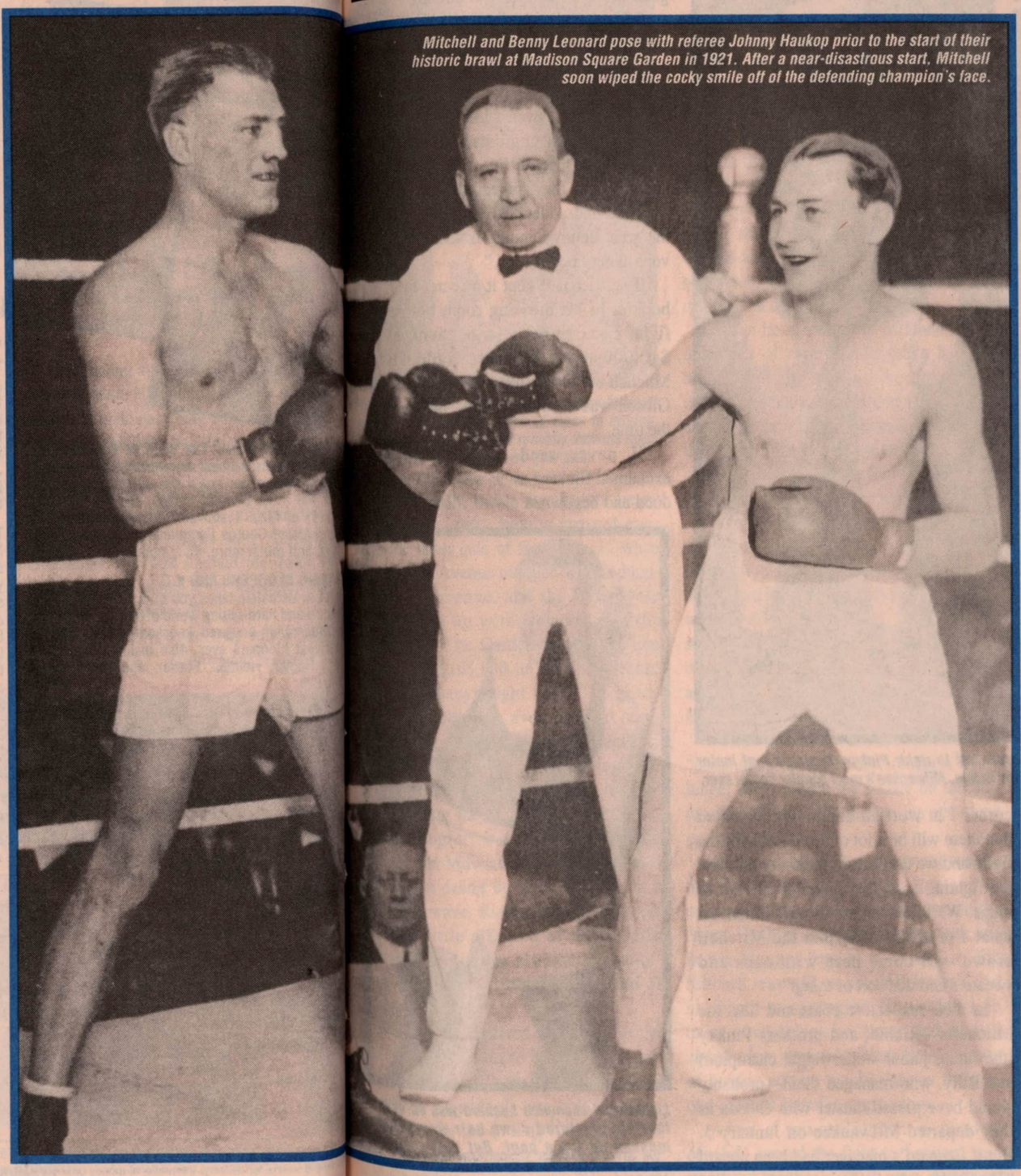
Richard Harvey Mitchell, "The Milwaukee Idol," was probably the best and without question was the most popular boxer ever produced in the Wisconsin city once known as "The Beer Capital Of America." Over a half-century ago, Milwaukee also used to be one of the country's top fight venues, thanks in large part to Mitchell, who became a prize fighter around the same time the sport was legalized in Wisconsin over the objection of Police Chief John T. Janssen, who called boxing the "Plug-Ugly" and thought its practitioners on a par with most inhabitants of his jail. That image was almost singlehandedly changed by Mitchell, a handsome and humble man whose personality set him apart from other fighters as much as his stinging left jab and fancy footwork.

Fred Saddy trained Mitchell. Before he died in 1989, Saddy recalled in an interview that when he and Richie walked to Tom Larkin's gym on the main drag in downtown Milwaukee, it would invariably take them a half-hour to go two blocks, because Mitchell would be mobbed by admirers rushing out of stores and idling cars to shake his hand.

The night before his bouts at the Milwaukee Auditorium, hundreds of members of the "Mitchell Boosters Club" would parade around town behind a truck carting a complete brass band. They would wind up at the hotel where Richie's opponent was trying to get his precious rest, and hold a pep rally under his window. But even the guys in the other corner were Mitchell boosters.

"I don't believe there's another boxer I know who compares with Richie Mitchell," said Lew Tendler after they fought in 1920. "He's a real gentleman."

If he inflicted a cut on an opponent, he would stop and apologize. He had Joe Benjamin out on his feet in their match, but instead of going for the finish as the Auditorium crowd screamed for him to do, Mitchell pleaded with the referee to stop the fight.



Mitchell and Benny Leonard pose with referee Johnny Haukop prior to the start of their historic brawl at Madison Square Garden in 1921. After a near-disastrous start, Mitchell soon wiped the cocky smile off of the defending champion's face.

"I can't hit him," he explained. "One more punch might kill him."

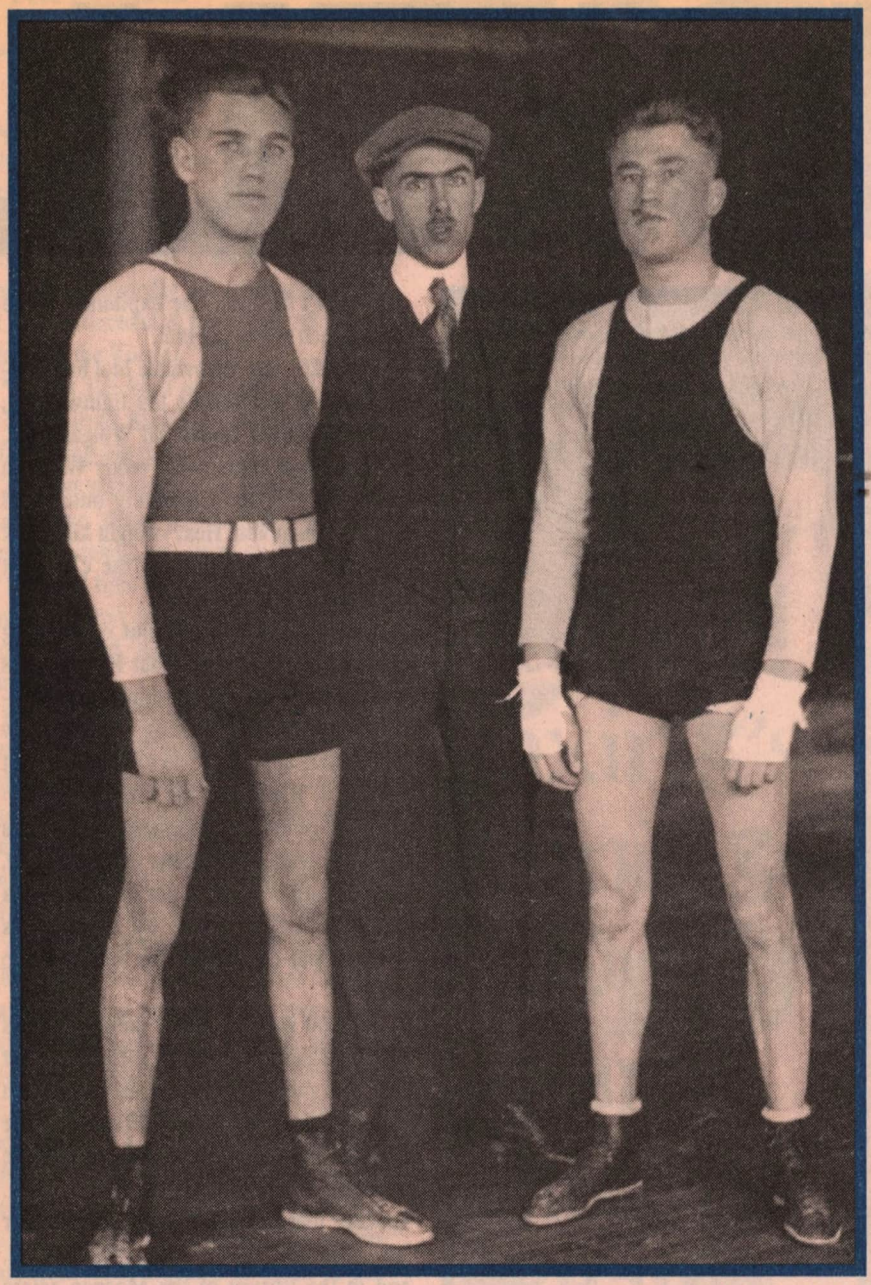
By 1920, The Milwaukee Idol had beaten many of the world's top lightweights, including former champ Ad Wolgast, and, in no-decision bouts with Freddy Welsh in 1916 and '17, had decisively outclassed the then-champion. Heavyweight king Jack Dempsey called Mitchell "the cleverest lightweight in the country."

His attributes in and out of the ring made Mitchell exactly what Rickard was looking for when the big-thinking promoter set out to give boxing a brand new image and appeal in New York City. It needed it. Banned in the Empire State in 1918 for general unsavoriness, boxing was legalized with reservations again in 1920, and Rickard wanted to put the sport on a more dignified plane by trading its sweater-and-cap image for tails and top hat.

Rickard got an unlikely partner in Miss Ann Morgan, daughter of mega-financier J.P. Morgan. She headed the American Committee on Devastated France, whose purpose was raising money to restore the European country trashed by World War I. Seeking mass attention and donations for her cause, she joined forces with Rickard, and in the library of the Morgan estate where, it was reported, J.P. himself had "transacted some of the greatest financial deals in the world's history," the deal was made to have Mitchell fight Leonard at Madison Square Garden for the lightweight championship under the banner of Miss Morgan's committee.

Many boxing experts rank Leonard as the greatest lightweight champion ever. The New Yorker was an impeccable ring stylist whose patent leather hair was hardly ever mussed in the ring. He had turned back all the challengers for the title he'd won from Welsh in 1917, just a month after knocking out Mitchell in Milwaukee.

Leonard would be the favorite in the rematch, but the most important thing was



Fighting was a family affair with the Mitchells. From left to right: Pinkey (boxing's first junior welterweight champion), Billy (who managed both), and Richie, Milwaukee's most popular fighter ever.

that a good, stylish exhibition of the manly art of self-defense take place between two wholesome boys whose shoes any mother would be relieved to find beneath her daughter's bed, before a crowd made up of the *creme de la creme* of New York society. Hopefully, it would put boxing's plug-ugly days firmly in the past. But some had reservations, including Billy Gibson, Leonard's manager.

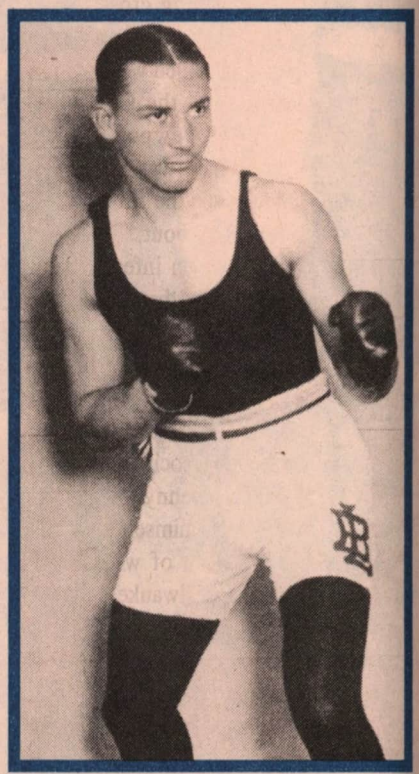
"I know that Benny will be all right. He's had the best bringing up in the Bronx, and I am having all the seconds reading up on etiquette and that sort of thing so they won't make any bad breaks or any rough cracks," Gibson announced. "It's the other corner I'm worried about. We expected that there will be a lot of swell folks for the fight, and we don't want them to think that the fighting crowd is made up of a lot of mugs. We'll show class in our corner, but what I'm afraid of is that the Mitchell crowd will come here with caps and sweaters and that sort of thing."

In their respective coats and ties, the Mitchells—Richie, and brothers Pinkey (the future junior welterweight champion) and Billy, who managed them—probably would have passed muster with Gibson as they departed Milwaukee on January 3. But if Leonard's manager had been aboard "The Richie Mitchell Special" that pulled out of town for New York 10 days later, he might have thrown the etiquette book at a couple of hundred Boosters on board. For $150 each, the passengers on the rented train got a road-trip Pullman berth, tickets to the fight, and a chance to lose all the money they had in the continuous crap game set up in the train's bathroom.

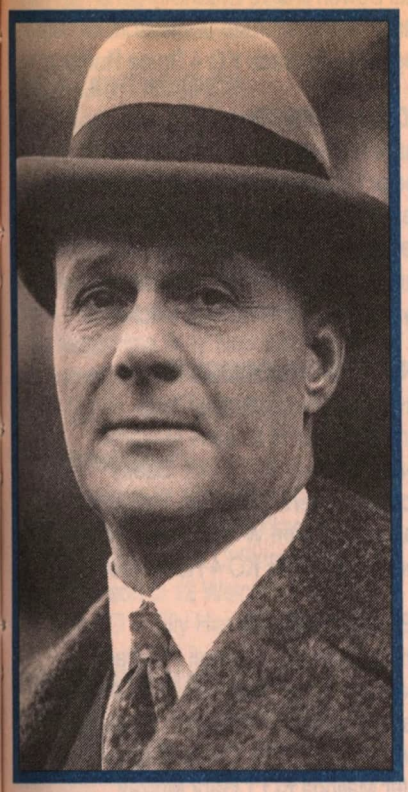
When some of her society chums criticized her involvement with a decadent prize fight, Miss Morgan protested that Leonard and Mitchell "are two bright, young men, and from what I hear are two of the cleverest pugilists in the world." Asked for a prediction, the diplomatic spinster said they appeared to be evenly matched and added, "Tis whispered even the great Benny Leonard is somewhat nervous about the outcome."

If so, Leonard kept it a secret from his bookie. In his dressing room before the fight, Leonard bet a large chunk of his $40,000 purse that he would knock Mitchell out in the first round. Presumably, Gibson was off straightening his cravat at the time.

"I never seed nuthin' like it!" exclaimed Rickard as he watched the tuxedoed and begowned crowd fill the Garden.



Lightweight champion Leonard was so skilled that his plastered down hair was seldom mussed during a bout. But that certainly wasn't the case when he met the challenge of Mitchell in New York City.



Promoter Tex Rickard hoped the Leonard-Mitchell match would bring a touch of class to boxing, especially as the sport had recently become legal again in New York after a two-year ban.

It was the night, wrote THE RING's Jersey Jones later, "when boxing crossed over from the other side of the tracks ... when rugged 10th Avenue mingled with fashionable Park Avenue, and the Gas House District met up with Newport and the Hamptons." The Garden was full. There was almost $163,000 in the till, a record for a non-heavyweight bout. The glitzy tone of the occasion even infected hard-boiled newspaperman Westbrook Pegler.

"Leonard will flutter into the ring done up as a spring song with ribbon rosettes worked along the belt of his boxing costume," Pegler wrote. "And Richie Mitchell, the Milwaukee social-gangster, is figuring on doing up Benny's nose in a permanent wave. Richie himself will wear a simple little creation of white satin embroidered with the Milwaukee coat-of-arms—a blutwurst rampant on a field of pumpernickel."

When Richie entered the ring at 10:30 p.m., there was a brave but lonely whoop from the Boosters in their encampment 10 rows from ringside. It was obliterated by the ovation for the smiling champion, who might have been striding onto a movie set as much as into a boxing ring. "His hirsute adornment, as usual, was plastered tightly back. The part in the middle would indicate that he spends a great deal of time before a mirror in preparation for auspicious occasions," wrote Sam Levy of *The Milwaukee Journal*.

So had ring announcer Joe Humphries, whose appearance in tails instead of his customary drab suit drew cat calls from the louts in the $2 seats. When decorum was restored, Humphries introduced the fighters, they posed for pictures with referee Johnny Haukop, and boxing's new kinder, gentler era officially got underway.

And there was Mitchell, ruining everything by falling down every time Leonard punched him, turning Rickard's great scientific duel between equals into a joke. Gibson was right: Tex should have known better than to serve a Beertown fighter to a champagne crowd.

But as he screamed at Mitchell's handlers out of rage and to make himself heard over the roar of the pro-Benny crowd, suddenly the Garden turned quiet enough to hear the pickpockets at work in the aisles. When Rickard and the Mitchell cornermen looked up to find out what had happened, they never seed nuthin' like it.

As Mitchell hauled himself up a third time just before Haukop counted 10, Leonard—who had arrogantly gestured for him to get up—went in to finish him and win his dressing room bet. But as he did so, Mitchell instinctively threw a left hook that struck the champion in the stomach, and followed with a right that landed on Benny's chin and toppled him.

"That punch," said Leonard later, "came most unexpectedly. It was a dying lunge, but it caught me square on the button. The floor just seemed to sag and come up under me."

At the count of three, Leonard rose to one knee, and at nine he unsteadily regained his feet and staggered against the ropes. His hair was definitely mussed, and he was bleeding from a cut on his face. But Mitchell was still so out of it himself that he forgot to apologize. He couldn't do much of anything else, either, and the bell ended what, almost 75 years later, a group of boxing editors would vote as the second-greatest round in ring history.

After a minute's rest, a revived Mitchell carried the fight to Leonard, and staggered him again. Both were shaken up several times in the ensuing two rounds, as Miss Morgan anxiously twisted her program into confetti. The rest of the Garden was in a constant uproar. This was better than a masked cotillion.

Leonard's manager, Billy Gibson, had his doubts about how well Mitchell's rowdy Milwaukee fans would fit in with the society swells Rickard wanted to impress.

By round four, though, Mitchell was tiring and the tide shifted back in the champion's favor. Mitchell was so battered in the fifth that a hysterical Pinkey ran to his corner and irrationally begged Billy to "let me go finish it" for their brother. Round six was a duplicate of the first, with a helpless Richie knocked down three times. He still got up, but this time had nothing left to throw back, and Houkop finally awarded the fight to Leonard.

"The war-torn section of France could not look much worse than Mitchell did when the fight was stopped," Pagler wrote the next day.

Even though he lost the war, "Richie The Lionhearted," as he would be referred to in his hometown up to his death in 1949, was a hero, and Miss Morgan led the ovation for him as Mitchell was carried to his corner.

"Never in my life has anything given me such a thrill as Richie Mitchell gave

(Continued on page 64)

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Jeremy Williams KO 3 Yuri Yelistratov
Monte Barrett W 10 Greg Page
Vitali Klitschko KO 2 Mario Schiesser
Duncan Dokiwari KO 1 Rowyan Wallace
Alex Stewart KO 4 Ezra Sellers
Brian Nielsen KO 2 Garing Lane
Lance Whitaker KO 2 Jason Yarosz
Iran Barkley Tech. Draw 4 Dan Kosmicki
Oleg Maskaev KO 1 Toakipa Tasefa
Derrick Banks W 10 Jeff Wooden
Cliff Couser W 10 Everett Martin
Bob Mirovic W 12 Colin Wilson
Danny Williams W 12 Antoine Palatis
Mika Kihlstrom KO 5 Tony Halme
Brian Nix W 10 Mitch Green
Peter McNeeley W 6 Harry Funmaker
Terry Verners KO 3 Alonzo Highsmith

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Arthur Williams KO 9 Imamu Mayfield
(Wins IBF Title)
Marcelo Dominguez W 10 Miguel Aguirre
Stephan Anghern W 12 Dan Ward
Torsten May W 10 Pascal Warusfel
Dirk Wallyn KO 5 Raso Radusinovic
Rob Calloway KO 3 Dominick Carter
Ivan Camacho W 6 Steve Little

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Montell Griffin KO 6 Eric Davis
David Telesco KO 4 Frank Tate
Derrick Harmon KO 2 Reggie Strickland
Crawford Ashley W 12 Mohamed Siluvangi
Henry Wharton KO 6 Konstantin Okhrey
Jorge Castro W 10 Miguel Robledo
Peter Oboh KO 1 Ole Klemetsen
Eddy Smulders KO 4 Mike Pearman
Eddy Smulders KO 1 Tim Johnson
Rogerio Lobo KO 5 Raul Guichapani
Omar Sheika KO 2 Ray Domenge

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Sven Ottke W 12 Charles Brewer
(Wins IBF Title)
Robert McCracken KO 6 Napolean Pitt
Glenn Catley W 12 Andras Galfi
Mads Larsen KO 7 Peter Venancio
Mario Iribarren D 12 Randy Carver
Kevin Palmer W 10 Kenji Tamaoki
Paul Bowen KO 10 Enzo Giordano
Patrice Cord'Homme KO 10 Rene-Claude Dutard
Reginaldo Andrade KO 4 Bruce Rumbolz

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Hassine Cherifi W 10 Anthony Ivory
Hector Camacho W 10 Ken Sigurani
Alex Hilton KO 3 Rob Stowell
Stephane Ouellet W 8 Eddie Hall
Ramon Moyano W 12 Chris Sande
Dwain Williams W 10 Eric Mitchell

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
David Reid W 12 James Coker
Tony Marshall W 8 Jesus Mayorga
Ronald Weaver W 10 Orin Osbey
Nicolas Cervera W 12 Luis Vazquez
Mamadou Thiam W 10 Olivier Meunier
Hercules Kyvelos KO 4 Ron Pasek

WELTERWEIGHTS
James Page KO 2 Andrei Pestriaev
Shannan Taylor Tech. Win 6 Sukhyun Yun
Frankie Randall KO 6 Juan Soberanes
Sergio Acuna W 12 Carlos Baldomir
Peter Malinga KO 1 Gary Murray
Ray Collins KO 2 Lovell Finger
Ray Oliveira KO 7 Jose Mendez

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
Sharmba Mitchell W 12 Khalid Rahilou
(Wins WBA Title)
Jean-Baptiste Mendy W 10 Victor Barinov
Zab Judah KO 11 Darryl Tyson
Phillip Holiday KO 5 Tanveer Ahmed
Ahmed Santos D 10 James Crayton
Shea Neary W 12 Juan Carlos Villarreal
Ismael Chaves W 12 Alberto Cortes
Emanuel Burton KO 7 Jonathan Thaxton
Lawrence Ngobeni W 12 Abraham Skenjena
Jan Bergman W 10 Naas Scheepers
Paul Spadafora W 10 Sam Girard
Elio Ortiz KO 10 Omar Weis
Wilfredo Vilches W 10 Raul Cardenas
Hector Camacho Jr. W 10 Fred Curiel
Cory Spinks KO 1 Mike Cooley

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Cesar Bazan W 12 Mauro Lucero
(Retains WBC Title)
Israel Cardona W 12 Golden Johnson
John Brown KO 8 Gabriel Ruelas
Artur Grigorijan KO 10 Giorgio Campanella
Acelino Freitas KO 1 Jose Luis Montes
Miguel Arrozal KO 9 Aaron Lopez
Bobby Vanzie KO 10 Wayne Rigby
Aldo Rios W 12 Victor Hugo Paz
Edson Do Nascimento KO 2 Jorge Jara
Rick Roberts KO 3 Yasuharu Yamaguchi

Vivian Harris KO 3 Theon Holland
Daniel Attah W 6 Hicklet Lau

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
Roberto Garcia KO 5 Ramon Ledon
(Retains IBF Title)
Jesus Chavez KO 4 Rudy Lundsford
Justin Juuko W 12 John Bronson
Javier Jauregui W 10 Ricardo Rivera
Yodsonan Somanthachai KO 2 Jeffrey Onate
Dennis Holbaek KO 5 Fernando Alanis
Kengo Nagashima W 12 Nobutoshi Hiranaka
Koji Arisawa KO 5 Lito Gonzaga
Ryuhei Sugita KO 5 Andy Alagenio

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Naseem Hamed W 12 Wayne McCullough
Angel Vazquez KO 5 Edgar Garcia
Juan Manuel Marquez KO 3 Francisco Arreola
Steve Robinson D 12 Welcome Ncita
Paul Ingle KO 8 Billy Hardy

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
Vuyani Bungu W 12 Danny Romero
(Retains IBF Title)
Marco Antonio Barrera KO 3 Richie Wenton
Michael Brodie W 12 Sergei Devakov
Reynante Jamili KO 4 Frankie Mamuaya
Yutaka Manabe KO 7 Jun Toriumi

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Paul Lloyd W 12 Drew Docherty
Johnny Bredahl KO 2 Genaro Garcia
Jesper Jensen KO 3 Silverio Porras
Jess Maca W 10 Shigeru Nakazato

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
Felix Marfa W 10 Vernie Torres
Victor Godoy KO 8 Eric Sanabria
Somsak Singchatchaval KO 2 Luyandan Mini
Tomohito Higashijima W 10 Rolando Pascua

FLYWEIGHTS
David Guerault W 12 Alexander Mahmutov
Eric Morel W 12 Victor Burgos
Leo Gamez W 12 Gilberto Gonzalez
Peter Culshaw KO 7 Mzukisi Marali
Celes Kobayashi W 10 Nolito Cabato
Joma Gamboa W 10 Rudy Idano
Dave Coldwell W 10 Louis Veitch

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat KO 8 Taekil Lee
(Retains WBA Title)
Eric Jamili W 12 Falah Zena Fidal
Carmelo Caceres W 10 Mateo Baring
Luis Lazarte KO 4 Roberto Vallejos

STRAWWEIGHTS
Wolf Tokimitsu KO 7 Mohamad Sadik

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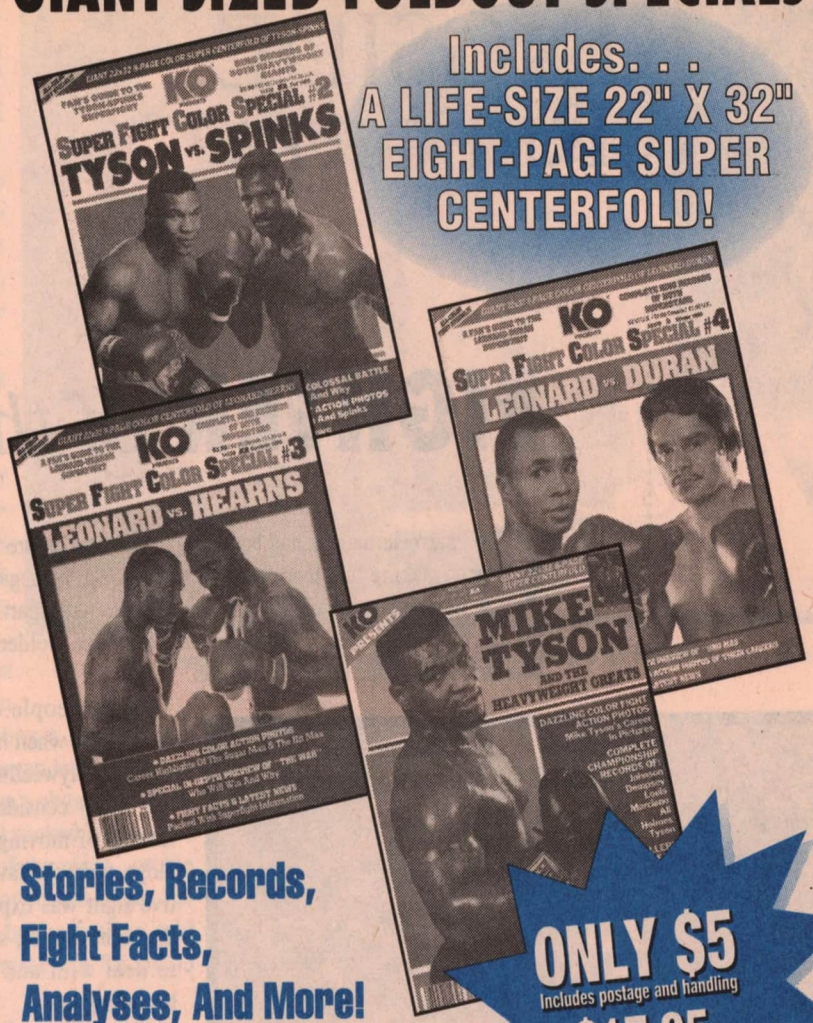

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

Genaro Hernandez had been in this position before. When Oscar De La Hoya was in the process of making that leap from mega-prospect to mega-star, he called on "Chicanito" for a reputation-enhancing challenge. And for the better part of six rounds, Hernandez provided it, keeping the fight close until a left uppercut from "The Golden Boy" decimated his nose, causing so much pain that Hernandez couldn't fight on.

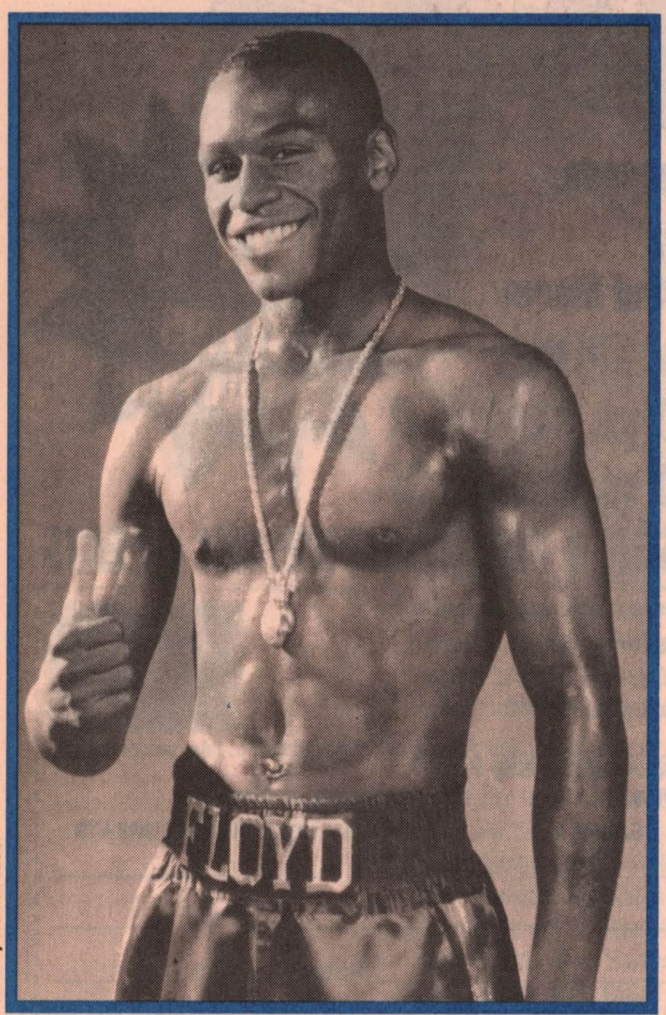


Photo by Frank Vitucci

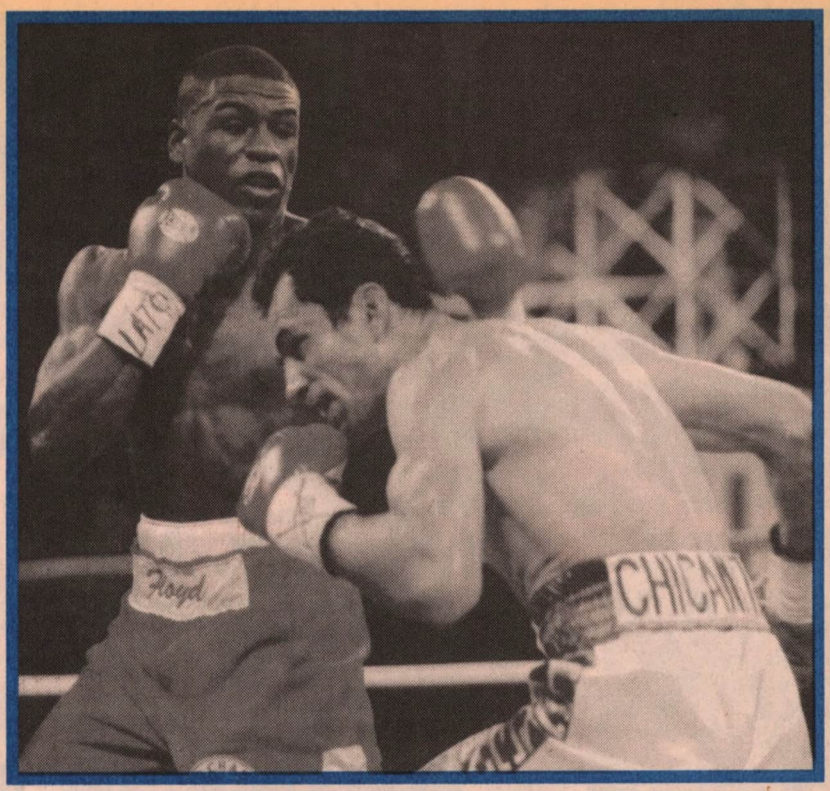
Most people expected the same stiff challenge from Hernandez when he defended the WBC super lightweight title against Mayweather, an exceedingly confident star in the making. Many considered Hernandez, fighting at his ideal weight instead of moving up five pounds as he had to meet De La Hoya, to be the favorite, and at the very least, a close, competitive fight was expected. But Mayweather dominated each of the eight rounds, showing speed Hernandez was not equipped to deal with and enough power to keep the champ from becoming brave.

Technically, Mayweather took longer than De La Hoya did to put Hernandez away, but in reality, Hernandez was a beaten man by the end of the second round. Maybe Hernandez isn't quite the fighter he was when he took on De La Hoya, but at just 21, Mayweather doesn't have the experience that De La Hoya, who had been a pro for three years and had already won a world title, did. For those who weren't sure beforehand, "Pretty Boy Floyd's" drubbing of Hernandez made it clear that a golden road lies ahead for the precocious Olympian.

• • • •

Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. KO 8 Genaro Hernandez



Mayweather's blinding combinations were too much for Hernandez

Las Vegas, Nevada: Promising to be a fighting champion weeks before he even challenged for the title, super-confident Mayweather used superior speed and power to wear down veteran Hernandez and win the WBC super featherweight crown via eighth-round TKO at the Las Vegas Hilton.

Mayweather, 130, Las Vegas, became the first 1996 U.S. Olympic medalist to win a professional world title, as his radar combinations to the head and body left a battered Hernandez, 130, East Los Angeles, unable to answer the bell for the ninth round.

After a typical "feel 'em out" opening round for both fighters, Mayweather, 21, inaugurated a swifter pace. And once he did so, the normally aggressive Hernandez, 32, simply couldn't get untracked. There were no knockdowns, but Mayweather frequently shook Hernandez in the middle rounds, landing quick four- and five-punch salvos the wearying Hernandez simply couldn't see.

Mayweather never got cocky or careless on this mission, a tendency cited by detractors in several of his early victories. He was pitching a shutout, and Hernandez' corner knew it, so the champion began letting loose in round eight. But Mayweather, 18-0 (14), wasn't about to let him back in the fight, jolting him with rights that knocked Hernandez, 38-2-1 (17), back where he had spent most of the night—on the ropes. With a heavy swelling developing over and under the champion's right eye, Rudy Hernandez, his brother/trainer, told referee Jay Nady (USA), "Genaro isn't coming out for round nine."

The CompuBox stats confirmed Mayweather's total domination, as he landed 221 of 412 punches thrown, compared to 103 of 314 for Hernandez. In the official judging, Chuck Giampa (USA) and Terry Smith (USA) both had it 79-73 when the fight was stopped, while Bob Logist (Belgium) had it 80-72. The deposed champion earned $600,000, while Mayweather collected $173,000, the largest payday of his brief career.

"Genaro Hernandez was a lot tougher than I anticipated," Mayweather acknowledged. "He had good movement. But after the second round, I used my jab more. I didn't want to punch myself out, I wanted to stay relaxed and do what I had to do to win."

Hernandez arrived at the postfight press conference just as his conqueror was rating his title-winning performance an "eight" out of 10.

"Make no mistake about this, Floyd Mayweather is definitely a '10'," Hernandez said. "I say that because he hit me like no other fighter has hit me. I take my hat off to Floyd. He'll be a champion for a long while.

"My brother, Rudy, stopped the fight. I didn't want to stop it, but there was no sense in keeping getting hit the way I was."

Bob Arum, who will co-promote Mayweather's first title defense, against Angel Manfredy on December 19 in Atlantic City, seemingly had the perfect valuation of Top Rank's new champion.

"I'm sure Floyd Mayweather surprised a lot of people in boxing with this spectacular performance," Arum said. "With all due respect, Genaro Hernandez is considered one of the very best 130-pounders out there. He's a true technician, but the way Floyd dominated, he made the champ look very ordinary. And this is just the beginning for young Floyd."

Promoter: Top Rank
Television: HBO
(10-3-98)
Jack Welsh

Sharmba Mitchell W 12 Khalid Rahilou

Paris, France: With pronounced superiority in speed and power, Mitchell, 138½, Washington, D.C., floored Rahilou, 139¾, Argenteuil, France, four times en route to a lopsided unanimous decision to claim the WBA junior welterweight title at the Palais Omnisports. It was Rahilou's third defense.

The 28-year-old mandatory challenger had Rahilou, 32, down twice in the second, once in the third, and once more in the seventh, and only the champion's sheer pride and recuperative powers kept him going to the finish. Mitchell assumed almost complete control from the outset, setting up his power shots with a fast southpaw jab and never allowing Rahilou a foothold. Had he been more clinical, he would surely have finished the Frenchman off, but the margin of victory was emphatic enough.

A long left that punctuated a four-punch combination precipitated Rahilou's first visit to the canvas in the second, and he was

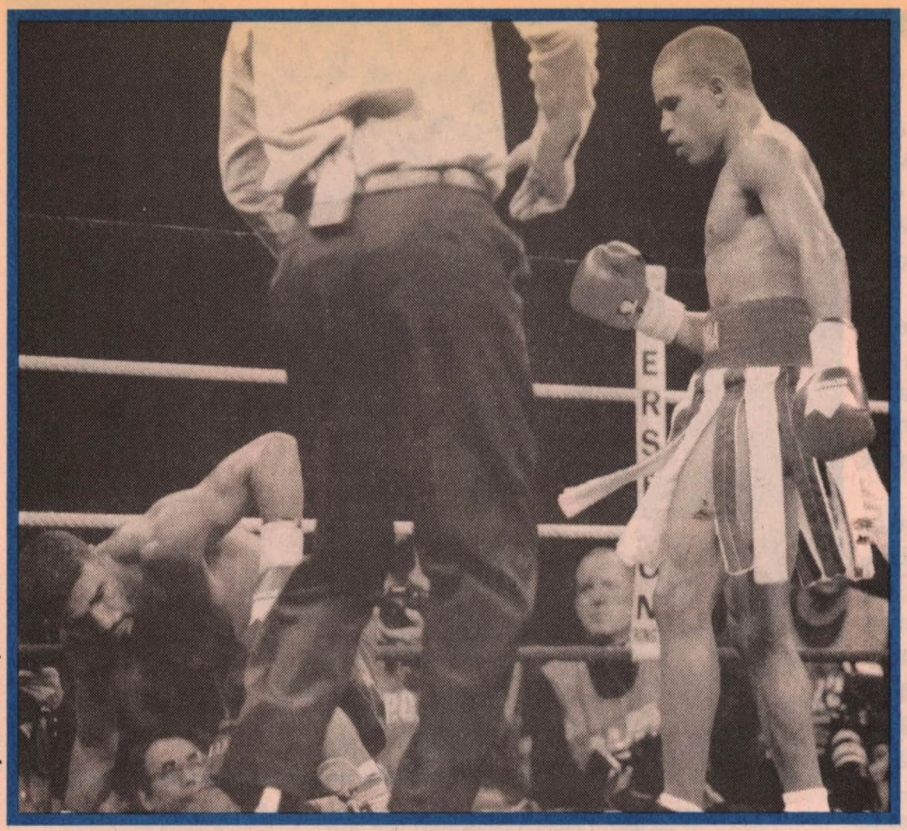


Photo by Tom Casino/Showtime

Mitchell sent defending champ Rahilou to the floor four times

down again shortly after, courtesy of another left. He grabbed and held until his head cleared, allowing him to safely negotiate the remaining minute or so of the round and last until the bell. But Mitchell landed a stunning lead left in the third that seemed to sap everything from Rahilou's body. He somehow made it back to his feet at Panamanian referee Julio Alvarado's count of eight and again weathered the storm, but clearly there would be no way back into the fight.

Rahilou responded belligerently in the fifth and sixth, but found himself shaking off the dust again a round later. Having switched to an orthodox stance, Mitchell connected with a solid right, Rahilou clambering up again at the count of two.

Mitchell had a point deducted in the 10th for punching low, and Rahilou was nothing if not brave, but even this failed to obscure the scale of Mitchell's win. Philippe Verbeke (Belgium) scored it 118-105, Ken Morita (Japan) had it 116-107, and Rafael Carabano (Venezuela) saw it 116-110. THE RING scored the bout 117-109. "Now I want to unify the title," said an ambitious Mitchell afterward.

Television: Showtime
Promoter: AB Stars Productions
(10-10-98)
Brian Doogan

Pichitnoi C. Siriwat KO 8 Taekil Lee

Bangkok, Thailand: Fast-punching lefty Pichitnoi (previously fighting as Pichitnoi Sithbangprachan), 108, easily whipped Korean Lee, 108, in each of the first seven rounds. Lee's eyes were swollen so badly that Pichitnoi was awarded a TKO win just after the bell to start the eighth round, allowing the Thailander to retain the WBA junior flyweight title.

The bout took place at the Convention Hall at the Central Plaza Hotel in conjunction with the WBA Convention being held there. Some 4,000 partisan fans were in attendance along with participants of the Convention.

Pichitnoi scored his third defense since flattening Japan's Keiji Yamaguchi with a single southpaw right hook in the second round in Osaka, Japan, in December of 1996. The scores after the seventh read as follows: Samuel Conde (Puerto Rico) and Ove Ovesen (Denmark) both 70-63, and Silvestre Abainza (Philippines) 69-64, all for the lefty champ.

It was a lopsided affair from the outset. The Thailander landed sharp one-two combos and southpaw right hooks to the shorter Korean in the opening canto. Pichitnoi swept the second through fourth rounds with accurate lefts, and the fifth saw Pichitnoi swarm over the crouching challenger with a flurry of punches.

Lee attempted to attack the faster champ in the beginning of the sixth, but his blows were wild and inaccurate. Pichitnoi was able to take back the initiative with effective combos in the closing seconds of the round.

As Pichitnoi, 20-1 (12), battered him at will in the seventh, the Korean's eyes were almost swollen shut. Referee Armando Garcia (USA) had Lee, 6-3-1 (3), examined by the ringside physician, and Garcia waived his arms to signal the champ's TKO triumph. The Thailand Boxing Commission said that the bell to begin the eighth had already sounded when the ref signaled the end, and the ring announcer officially announced it as an eighth-round stoppage.

Pichitnoi, whose last mandatory defense took place in Thailand with a unanimous decision over Hadao C.P. Gym, would have been obliged to meet the number-one contender, Joma Gamboa of the Philippines, by December 1.

Promoters: Songchai Ratanasuban, Yangsup Shim
(10-19-98)
Joe Koizumi

Roberto Garcia KO 5 Ramon Ledon

Atlantic City, New Jersey: Garcia's first defense of the IBF junior lightweight title almost proved to be his last when southpaw Ledon, 12-1-1 (9), blasted the champion to the canvas in the second round with a searing left to the head. Garcia, 128½, Los Angeles, beat referee Eddie Cotton's count, but was rocked again by another left late in the round and was bleeding from a cut over his right eye by the time the bell sounded to end the toughest three minutes of his professional career.

Ledon, a Cuban political exile, now fighting out of Miami as a member of Team Freedom, landed another sharp left in the

third and kept Garcia's eye bleeding. But "Grandpa" began to pull himself together in the fourth, dropping his off-balance challenger with a bodyshot for a fluky but official knockdown.

Garcia, sensing his adversary was rapidly running out of gas, exploded in the fifth with a sensational series of combinations to the head. Ledon, 130, went down twice under an avalanche of left and rights, and was rescued just 58 seconds into the round as he crashed down for the second time.

"All I remember is seeing the referee giving me the eight-count," said Garcia of the knockdown he suffered in the second. "Ledon is very strong, his jab very powerful. I wasn't focused the first two rounds. I usually start slow, winning round by round. I don't go out looking for a knockout. But against Ledon, that's what I needed to do."

The dramatic turnaround had the crowd of 2,345 at the Trump Taj Mahal's Mark G. Etess Arena in an uproar and marked Garcia, 31-0 (24), as perhaps a future opponent for the winner of the upcoming Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Angel Manfredy clash. It also reinforced the theory that Team Freedom fighters frequently run out of steam after quick starts. Ledon's stablemate, Diobelys Hurtado, had Pernell Whitaker down twice in a 1997 bid to win the WBC welterweight title, but faded badly and was stopped in the 11th round.

Television: HBO
Promoter: America Presents
(10-24-98)
Nigel Collins

John Brown KO 8 Gabriel Ruelas

Atlantic City, New Jersey: The 30-year-old Brown enjoys a good war movie because it's the closest thing he can find to his real-life occupation as a boxer. And fortunately for the usually hard-luck Brown, Atlantic City, the script for his fight with Ruelas, 28, Sylmar, California, called for him to play the role of hero.

Actually, Ruelas, 45-5 (25), looked as if he had just gotten back from a war after Brown, 19-5 (10), was done with him. Brown used a relentless attack to score an eighth-round TKO victory over a shopworn Ruelas at the Taj Mahal. Brown, 132¼, pressed the action early, burrowing his way through Ruelas' defense. Once inside, Brown stung Ruelas, 133, with bodyblows. Ruelas, meanwhile, struggled to mount a consistent offense, as most of his punches were delivered off-balance while he lunged at his smaller, quicker opponent.

"The Eastern Beast" showed no signs of wear coming off a hard-fought, 12-round decision loss to Angel Manfredy barely a month earlier. In that bout, Brown was the heavy underdog, but he was aggressive and strong, and had a shot at the major upset before fading toward the end of the fight. His performance, however, caught the attention of HBO Sports Vice President Lou DiBella, who pulled Brown aside after the fight and told him he was impressed by what he saw.

DiBella wasted little time in contacting Brown when Jesse James Leija pulled out of his scheduled fight with Ruelas. Despite just two weeks notice, Brown, who toils for a heating and sheet metal company by day, became a legitimate title contender with his one-sided win on national TV.

Brown's feistiness manifested itself quickly against Ruelas. The 5'3" Brown would crouch, then step in and rip Ruelas with

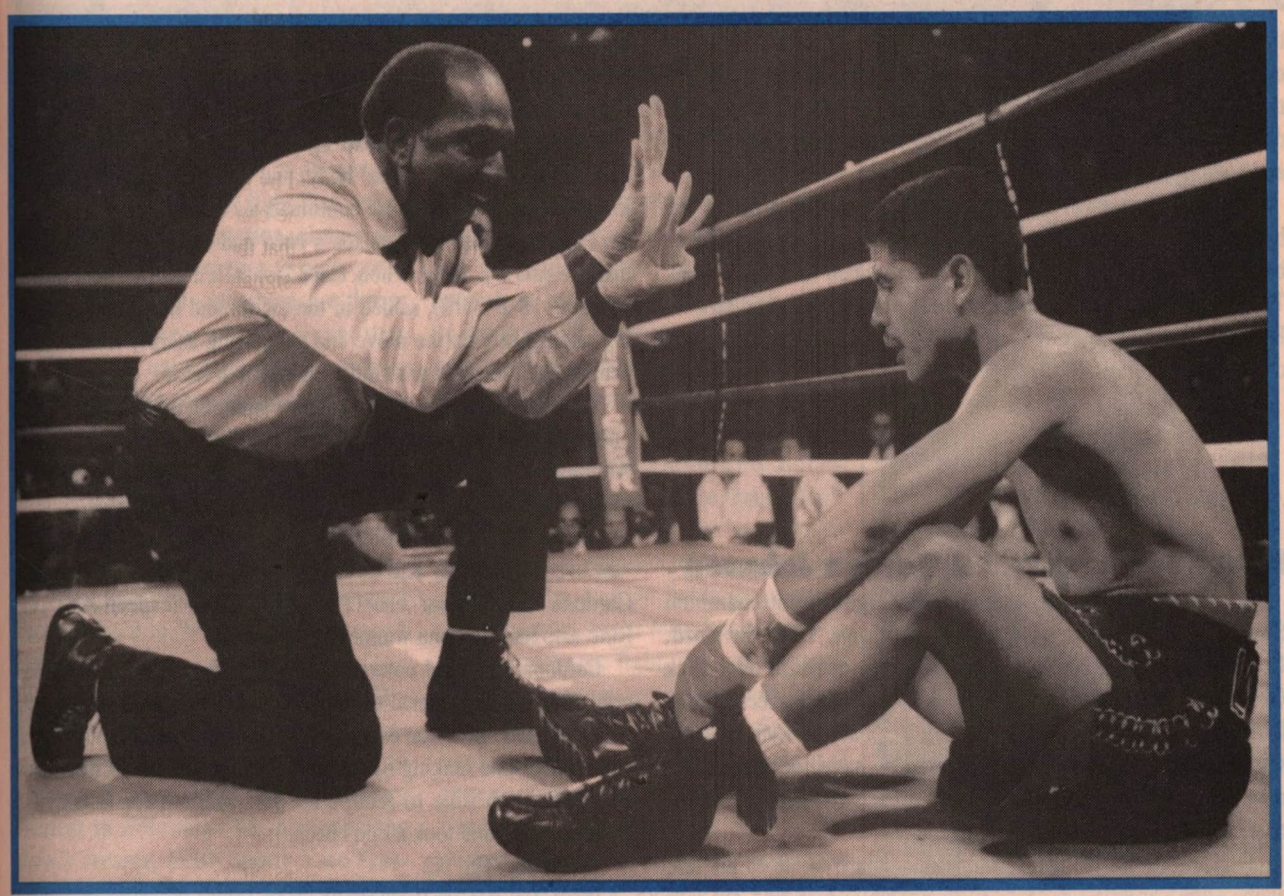
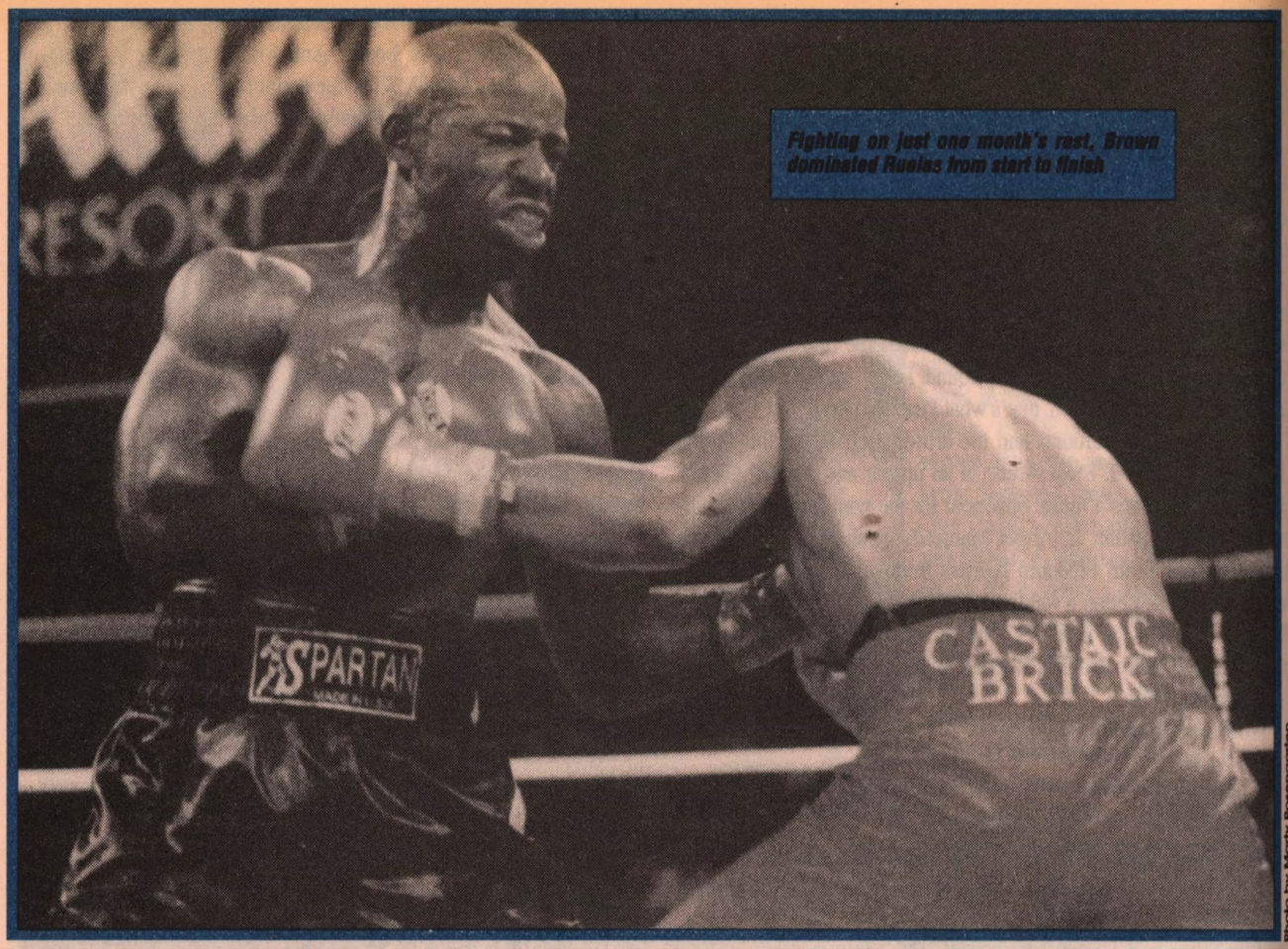


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Ref Cotton lays the count on Garcia, but the champ would storm back to defeat Ledon



Fighting on just one month's rest, Brown dominated Ruelas from start to finish

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

lightning-fast combinations. Brown stunned the former 130-pound champion in the second, then had him in real trouble for the first time in the fourth. Pinned up against the ropes, Ruelas appeared defenseless against the onslaught of rights and lefts from Brown, and a left uppercut snapped Ruelas' head back.

In the sixth, Brown knocked Ruelas down with a heavy left hook that punctuated a five-punch combination. Ruelas was so bewildered by the end of the round, he struggled to find his stool. The finish came in the eighth, with Brown again pounding away at Ruelas when referee Tony Orlando (USA) finally stepped in and called a halt at the 1:09 mark.

Television: HBO

Promoter: America Presents

(10-24-98)

Joe Santoliquito

Israel Cardona W 12 Golden Johnson

Miami, Florida: With a shot at IBF lightweight champion Sugar Shane Mosley on the line, Cardona, 135, Hartford, Connecticut, hammered out a grueling split decision over slick Golden Johnson, 134½, Killen, Texas, at the Miccosukee Gaming Dome. It was a hard-fought bout that emphasized both "Pito's" strengths and shortcomings, and showed he has a lot of improvements to make, especially defensively, if he's to have any sort of chance of unseating Mosley.

Johnson's fight plan was simple and smart: circle to his left, away from Cardona's potent left hook, while pumping out jabs and slashing counters. It was a strategy that enabled him to get off to a brisk start over the first few rounds, but Johnson's punching power just wasn't sufficient to hold his aggressive adversary at bay throughout the entire 12 rounds.

Cardona, 30-2 (22), picked up the pace in the fourth, digging painful-looking hooks to the body, and then coming upstairs with jolting shots to the head. He continued his bruising attack over the next three rounds, but Johnson's chin and boxing skills enabled him to survive. And when Cardona failed to put him away, Johnson, 15-2-2 (10), rallied in the eighth and ninth rounds, boxing intelligently on the move and countering sharply as his opponent trudged forward with little regard for defense.

The 10th was close, but Cardona's strength, determination, and punching power allowed him to regain control the last two rounds. Although outgunned, Johnson, his left eye swollen almost completely shut, gamely stood and slugged the last 30 seconds.

Judge Ron Stevens scored the fight for Johnson, 116-112, but was overruled by Jay Kasses and Nelson Vazquez, who voted for Cardona by tallies of 116-112 and 115-113, respectively. THE RING also had Cardona winning, 116-112.

Cardona, who had entered the bout as the USBA champ, not only retained the regional title, but also picked up the NABF belt, which Johnson had won earlier in the year. But despite his victory and number-one ranking by the IBF, Team Cardona decided there wasn't enough time to recuperate and prepare for Mosley by November 14, and took a rain check.

Television: ESPN2

Promoter: Banner Promotions

(10-16-98) ■

10 Reasons

(Continued from page 37)

to prosper, and it's reassuring to know that the current crop is so bountiful.

6. Finally, a significant middleweight fight: It seems aeons since there's been a middleweight fight, title bout or otherwise, that's gotten our juices flowing. Although Bernard Hopkins has been regarded as the best 160-pounder in the world for several years, that distinction has meant little at the box office. Because of his dominance, none of "The Executioner's" fights have held much suspense, and about the only question has been whether or not his challenger would last the distance. But that changed in August '98 when Hopkins fell out of the ring and injured his ankle during his defense against unsung Robert Allen, resulting in a fourth-round no-contest. While the incident itself, which occurred when referee Mills Lane accidentally pushed Hopkins between the ropes while trying to force a break, was bizarre, it's what Allen was doing before the mishap that has sparked interest in the IBF-mandated rematch.

Although he was behind on the official scorecards, Allen, a tall, powerfully put together southpaw, was giving Hopkins a much tougher fight than anticipated. His speed, aggression, and roughhouse tactics were proving to be a problem for the champ, and there are those, including Allen, who believe that Hopkins may have taken the easy way out by claiming that his ankle was too badly injured to continue. Allen has since won the so-called "interim" title with a meaningless one-round blastout of no-hoper Abdula Ramadan. His rematch with Hopkins, however, will give the once-glamorous middleweight division a least one fight in '99 that holds a hint of intrigue.

7. The ongoing success of HBO's *Boxing After Dark*: When *B.A.D.* premiered with the scintillating Marco Antonio Barrera-Kennedy McKinney slugfest in February '96, not even the show's creator, HBO Sports Vice President Lou DiBella, could have imagined that the series would continue to provide the most consistently thrilling fights on television. Although the budget for *B.A.D.* is considerably less than that of the network's *Championship Boxing*, a winning formula of matching hungry fighters eager to prove their worth has resulted in a string of fabulous fights: Gatti-Wilson Rodriguez, Daniel Zaragoza-Wayne McCullough, Vince Phillips-Kostya Tszyu, Robinson-Gatti, etc., etc. With a two-year track record of excellence behind it, there's no reason to think that *B.A.D.* will deviate from the format that has made it so popular.

And while on the subject of TV boxing, there's more good news ...

8. ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* series: Maybe you're crazy about Max Kellerman, maybe he drives you crazy. Either way, isn't it a relief to know that mid-level boxing is still available on a weekly basis now that USA's *Tuesday Night Fights* is off the air? ESPN was one of the pioneers of cable boxing, but a few years ago it began switching nights and time slots so frequently, fight fans were never quite sure when to tune in. But now that boxing is on "The Deuce" every Friday, people should soon get back into the habit of watching on a regular basis.

Another positive of ESPN2's new format is the vintage fights that are such a major part of every program. True, boxing can't rely on yesterday's heroes to keep the game vibrant today, but there could be a fortunate side effect of showing the golden-oldies: Fans who've lost interest in the current scene might watch to see their old favorites, and end up getting hooked on boxing again, especially if one of the young fighters on the live portion of the show strikes their fancy.

9. George Foreman and Larry Holmes are finally going to fight: Don't laugh. "The Birthday Bash" is going to attract a lot of attention to the sport. Sure, plenty of the prefight publicity is going to be negative, but if turns out to be even a halfway decent fight, and nobody ends up in the hospital, everybody will forget what the critics said before the fight and bask in the glow of the sentimental appeal of two old favorites taking one final turn in the spotlight. And if the dueling grandpas don't totally embarrass themselves, maybe some of the crossover fans who haven't paid to watch a fight since the pair was in their primes will be motivated to expand their interest to some of boxing's younger stars.

10. We might actually get to see somebody knock that smug grin off of "Prince" Naseem Hamed's face: Don't take this the wrong way; Naz has been good for boxing and we really don't wish the little popinjay any undue harm. But half of the fun of watching him fight is hoping that the other guy knocks him on his leopard-skin trunks—and maybe even keeps him there. While the flamboyant Englishman has looked practically unbeatable fighting at home, his two bouts in the United States—an up-from-the-floor TKO of Kevin Kelley and a painfully passive 12-round decision over Wayne McCullough—have shown Hamed to be eminently mortal. With big guns like Marco Antonio Barrera, Juan Manuel Marquez, Freddie Norwood, and the two Angels (Manfredy and Vazquez) waiting for him on this side of the Atlantic, future Naz fights just might prove more entertaining than even The Prince had bargained for. ■

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David Reid

(Continued from page 39)

first belt (the WBC Continental Americas super welterweight doodad). But, thankfully, not his first defeat.

The knocks on Reid range all the way from the undisputable danger of his droopy left eyelid to unfair claims that he won the Olympic gold medal with a lucky punch. Nobody disputes the power in his right glove, but skeptics ask what good is an equalizer if, as was the case with Coker, Reid can't land it?

"He's a slick guy, very deceiving in the ring," admitted Reid. "I couldn't hit him with the shots I usually hit 'em with. You look from the outside and say, 'Oh, I can take him out.' But when you get into the ring, he's a little bit difficult. He was tough, he was awkward. But I did enough to win."

The problem is that doing just enough to win isn't good enough when you want to be a superstar. Fans and critics alike want sensational blastouts like the Brown fight, but that sort of fight only gets you so far. At some point, a developing fighter has to learn what it's like to be in an uncomfortable, awkward fight where things go wrong. Things like cuts and knockdowns. By accepting such a difficult opponent, Mitchell was gambling a little bit of today for what he hopes will be an even richer tomorrow.

The knockdowns were troubling, but hardly condemning. The first was the flukier of the two. Coker landed a left to the shoulder in the 11th that caused an already off-balance Reid to pitch forward. He regained his balance by sticking out his gloves, thereby creating an automatic knockdown the instant they touched the canvas.

The knockdown in the 12th was more substantial. A short left collided with the side of Reid's face, and even though the blow didn't look particularly forceful, it pitched him over. True, the moisture on the painted canvas (there goes that lethal Budweiser logo again) seemed to have almost as much to do with the knockdown as the punch. But as Reid admitted: "It was a slip. But, you know, in the rules of boxing, when a glove touches you and you fall, that's a knockdown."

If Reid is willing to acknowledge that, it's only fair to point out that after both knockdowns, he dusted himself off and went after his tormentor with bad intentions, inflicting far more damage than Coker had with his pair of knockdown punches. Still, slippery logos notwithstanding, poor balance can be a serious problem.

Before the fight, Mitchell, the guiding light who decided the way to go was to match his man tough from the start, said he thought Reid needed only one, maybe two more fights before fighting for a world title. Afterward, the former head coach of the U.S. Olympic boxing team was still of the same mind.

"I really believe that in one or two more fights David will be ready," said Mitchell. "I was really surprised how Dave outboxed a boxer. Each round, I tried to make him pick it up. The first round through the fifth, I had it very close. But he did something I didn't think he could do: In the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, 10th, 11th, and 12th, he picked it up every round. He was stronger and worked the angles. David has the right style. By that I mean he can adapt to different styles, and if he can adapt to a tall southpaw, especially one like Coker who is a disciplined boxer, he can adapt to any style."

Mitchell has a point. Since the moment Reid won the gold with a come-from-behind, one-punch knockout of Alfredo Duvergel at the Atlanta Games, he's been branded a knockout artist. And while the dynamite in his right hand is irrefutable, Reid is more than just a puncher. It was his speed and boxing skills, far more than his punch, that carried him to victory over Coker.

In the third round, when an inadvertent clash of heads ripped open a long cut on Reid's forehead, instead of panicking, he instinctively went on the attack. But after cutman Fred Jenkins expertly stanched the flow of blood between rounds, Reid was smart enough to box at long range throughout the fourth, giving the cut medicine time to work its magic.

But of all the positive signs that filtered through what, on the surface at least, appeared to be a negative performance, it was Reid's fighting spirit that most impressed. Despite his Olympic credentials, high-powered connections, and HBO contract, Reid is, at his core, a Philly fighter, a product of the same mean streets that have created a proud tradition of never-say-die warriors such as Joe Frazier, Matthew Saad Muhammad, and Bennie Briscoe. Among other things, that means that when the going gets tough, he's going to dig down deep and go for the gusto. This attitude was most evident after Reid scrambled up from his 12th-round trip to the canvas and attacked Coker with renewed vigor.

"The crowd got me kinda hyped. They was screaming '2-8, 2-8.' That's the street corner I used to hang on," explained Reid, with a chuckle. "I heard that and I knew what they're talking about, and it kinda got me pumped up. I felt like I wanted to go psycho in the ring."

For Reid, going psycho in the ring doesn't involve biting ears or committing any other violation of the rules. It means letting it all hang out in an attempt to finish his man. But Coker, 19-1 (12), survived amidst a blizzard of punches, and Reid was candid enough to admit that he probably wouldn't have been able to stop his foe even if the fight had been scheduled for 15 rounds.

"I knew I wasn't going to knock him out by the second or third round because of his style," said Reid. "I couldn't hit him with any clean shots, the type of shots I can hit everybody else with. I tried to try all kinds of styles to get this guy, but I wanted to be patient at the same time. I told myself, *Dave, you've got a long night ahead of you. Don't go for the knockout, just go for the win.* But I'm glad I had an opponent who could take me the distance. If I had knocked him out in the third or fourth round, nobody would know whether I could go 12 rounds. Going 12 gave me a whole lot of confidence. It's a big-time learning experience for me."

Yet in spite of the subtle signs of progress detectable in a less-than-overwhelming performance, it was Reid's greatest weakness that dominated the postfight headlines. "Reid's First Title Eclipsed By Eye" declared the *Philadelphia Daily News*. "Is the condition, if irreparable, career-threatening?" asked

staff writer and frequent RING contributor Bernard Fernandez. The concern stems not from any further damage done to Reid's droopy left eye in the Coker bout, but from the supposition that Reid is forced to maneuver himself into ungainly positions into order to keep his good eye on the target—hence, perhaps, the off-balance knockdowns.

"That's just the way I move," insisted Reid. "I've been moving that way for the longest time. [WBC super welterweight champion and possible future opponent] Keith Mullings said that I was moving at a certain angle just to see, but that wasn't it. That's just the way I box. Somebody can always say my eye is hanging down, but I'm not really worried about it. It wasn't any problem. My eye just has a tendency to hang down a little low. I'm the one seeing through the eye, the one fighting with it."

Mitchell also claimed that the reason Reid was off-balance at the time of the knockdowns had nothing to do with his eye.

"You have to concentrate on keeping your left foot outside of the other guy's when you're fighting a lefthander," asserted Mitchell. "Dave did a good job of that for most of the fight, but a couple of times he got his feet tangled up."

Reid will be on the shelf until January, waiting for the cut to heal. Meanwhile, there will be some changes made. Normally, Mitchell, who lives in Michigan, comes into camp two weeks before a fight, leaving the early work to assistant trainers Al Fenel and Jenkins. From now on, however, Mitchell will spend a month with Reid before every fight. He's also looking for a different type of opponent for his charge's next outing, the complete opposite of a tall, defensive-minded southpaw like Coker.

"I always knew Dave was physically tough, but I have to get him mentally tough. And I think that Coker was the perfect fight for that," said Mitchell. "Next, I want somebody who is gonna be on his tail and pressure him. Somebody who doesn't give him time to think, where he has to just do it. From now on, I think you're going to see a helluva fighter."

Maybe even one good enough to live up to the promise of his nickname. ■

Eric Morel

(Continued from page 42)

little guys, like Johnny Tapia and Danny Romero, to make a lot of money and become big attractions," explained Trampler. "He is the reason we see guys like that on television all the time. Prior to that, there was rarely anybody under featherweight on television. Once Eric gets more exposure, he has everything necessary to create a lot of interest."

Trampler does concede, however, that while both Carbajal and Morel were Olympians, Morel will still be a tougher sell to the boxing public.

"Michael had a big city [Phoenix] as his home base, where there was a tremendous fan base of Mexican-Americans," he explained. "He also was so close to Las Vegas that his fans could travel to see him with little difficulty. Eric is a Puerto Rican who lives in Madison, Wisconsin, which is not exactly a boxing hotbed. The fact that he is not a native of there makes it even more difficult."

While Madison, a college town with a population of 190,000 (almost a fifth of whom are students), is not be a boxing mecca, the city has shown an encouraging amount of support for its adopted son. Earlier this year, Lynch asked Top Rank's permission to personally promote a few shows there using Morel as the headliner. The first, against Willie Thomas, was held at the University of Wisconsin Fieldhouse on January 15 and drew 2,000 fans, even though the fight was on a Thursday evening and the students were on holiday recess. The second, on a Saturday night in May against Orlando Malone, drew only 1,500 fans, although the students were in town. While Lynch would have loved to put some more fans in the seats, he was thrilled with the large amount of newspa-

(Continued on page 59)

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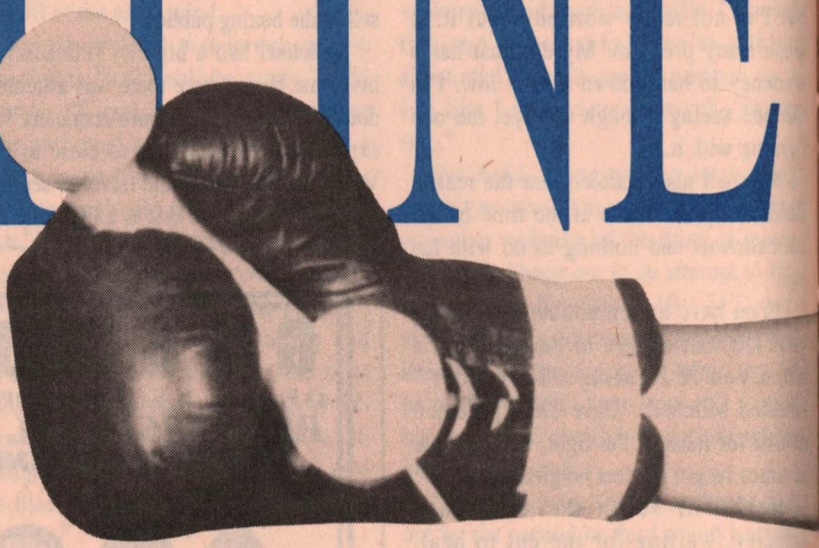

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Eric Morel

(Continued from page 57)

per and television coverage.

"Right now a lot of people have seen and heard of Eric, but we still want many more to become familiar with him," Lynch said. "This has never been a big boxing area, but with all the great cooperation of the media, I believe that will change."

In retrospect, Lynch now believes the fights at home might have actually hindered Morel's development a bit. He said the fighter, while being far from big-headed, was beating all of his opponents so easily that he started to get a bit complacent in the gym. In the six months prior to the Blanco fight, Lynch said he witnessed a "languishing" on Morel's part, and decided to combat that by stepping up the level of competition.

"Staying with lower-level opponents doesn't do anybody any good," he explained. "Eric's mind started wandering, and he was losing concentration because there were no significant challenges for him. He was winning, but not advancing or improving his skills for the better part of six months."

Morel is the first to admit that the win over Blanco provided the impetus to rekindle the fire in his belly.

"I knew he was going to be tough, and I would have to be at my best to beat him," the fighter said. "I trained really hard for that fight, and knew it would open a lot of doors. A lot of people didn't expect me to knock him out, but that is what I had in mind going in. Scoring knockouts is the way to make yourself known."

Morel's propensity to knock people out resulted in Olympic teammate Lawrence Clay-Bey nicknaming him "Little Hands Of Steel," because, as Samuels jokes, "'Little Hands Of Stone' was already taken by Roberto Duran." Morel began boxing at the age of eight and tried to emulate his idols, Sugar Ray Leonard and Hector Camacho, both of whom had flashy styles. He ended his stellar amateur career with a 124-14 record, was never off his feet, and scored a significant amount of knockouts along the way. The moniker given to him by Clay-Bey came after Morel not only dropped a sparring partner, but also shattered his eardrum during the Olympic Trials in Oakland, California.

The Morel family emigrated to Madison from their native Puerto Rico to join Eric's brother, Henry, who had attended the University of Wisconsin on a boxing scholarship and was then making the city his permanent home. The family patriarch, Cirillo, who works his son's corner and assists in the training, is employed as a building maintenance man, but was a full-time recreation director in Puerto Rico. He imparted a Herculean work ethic on all of his children.

"Besides the mother and father, there are seven brothers and sisters, and every damn one of them has a job," said Lynch. "The family is rock-solid, and hard work is no stranger to them."

The 65-year-old Lynch, a decorated Korean War veteran who took a bullet in the chest and had his neck broken by a land mine, runs the Muscles and Fitness Gym in Madison. He remembers the first day he met Morel in October '92.

"Eric was brought to the gym by his brother and barely spoke English, but Henry laid out a plan they had for him already," Lynch explained. "He was not even 17 years old yet, and they wanted him to stay amateur for another year or two. I agreed to work with him, but was skeptical. Dozens of fighters had come to me with the same story over the years. Then I watched him loosen up, worked the hand pads with him a bit, and within five minutes I knew that a gem had fallen in my lap."

After the Olympics, Morel was inundated with offers to turn pro by a host of promoters. Even if he was able to do so, it would have been against Lynch's nature to "wave a lot of money in his face," so he offered Morel nothing other than his loyalty and the promise to look out for his interests at all costs. For a young man as astute and emotionally stable as Morel, that was the best deal of all.

"There were so many people telling him to get away from me," said Lynch. "I call them 10-percenters because they were no more connected than you or I, but wanted him to sign a contract anyway and give up at least 10 percent of his earnings to them. They wanted him to move to South Florida or Puerto Rico, even though they had no television contacts or anything else. They were just guys looking to get 10 percent for doing nothing."

Morel is the first to admit that loyalty is one of the key components of his character.

"It is something I was born with, and handshake is my bond," he said. "There are not many things more important in this world."

That sense of loyalty has served him well, and even extends beyond his familial and pugilistic relationships. For several years he was employed at a local Holiday Inn as a cleaning man. When the hotel was recently bought out by the Marriott Corporation, he stayed on and was promoted to a job checking people in and out at the front desk from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. He says that even after he wins a world title, he will continue to work there because of the hotel's accommodating nature over the years. Their loyalty and consideration enabled him to successfully juggle both his employment and boxing responsibilities.

"I will never forget the treatment they gave me for such a long time," Morel said. "Besides, I like working as much as I like boxing. I can't see giving up either, no matter how successful I become."

"Eric is a fine representative for the hotel, and we are thrilled to have him here," said Julie Gruber, the assistant front office manager. "He is good with the guests, even if they don't recognize him, although a lot of people do. We are very proud of him not only as a boxer, but because of the way he worked himself up. He has so many good qualities, and will always be back to work on the very first day he is back in town after a fight."

Because Team Morel views Tapia as the measuring rod for the credibility that they strive for, they hope that despite political difficulties, he will be standing across the ring from Morel sooner rather than later.

"One year ago Eric would have lost against Tapia," said Lynch. "Six months ago he might have lost. Two months from now there will be nobody, Tapia included, who can beat him. This kid has it all. There is not a cocky bone in his body, but he's never nervous, just ready to go when that bell rings. There is just so much to this kid. People haven't even begun to see the best of him." ■

Robert Mladinich, a freelance writer based in New York City, is a regular contributor to this magazine.

New Faces

(Continued from page 18)

At the time of the fight, the WBA welterweight title was vacant and Pestriaev was the number-one contender, so it was believed by many that the winner would be declared champion. However, Main Events had previously obtained a Superior Court ruling in New Jersey on behalf of their fighter Jose Luis Lopez, stating that Lopez, as the WBA's number-two contender, should have been the one to fight Pestriaev to fill the vacancy. As a result, the Page-Pestriaev fight would merely determine which fighter would face Lopez in the title fight.

Oh, well. Page has waited his whole life for a chance like this, and a few months more wasn't going to hurt. He may not be viewed as an underdog anymore either, as he was against Pestriaev. That fight let everyone know the power Page has. His knockout received rave reviews from the Showtime broadcast team. Pestriaev was so far out of it, he couldn't even fold his legs to sit on his stool. Page, who has naturally heavy hands, sits down on his punches perfectly, making him able to thrust his whole body weight behind each power blow.

"There's no question Page possesses one of the best powershots in the welterweight division—maybe the best powershot," Showtime analyst Bobby Czyz said. "He has Mike Tyson-type power, but not all great punchers have great chins. If he has a great chin, he could be one of the most dangerous punchers in boxing in some time. He's extremely impressive."

If there was an area of concern, Czyz pointed out, it's that Page holds his left hand down around his waist. This leaves his left side open for an opponent's right hand. A warning to those attempting to exploit this flaw, however, should be noted. Pestriaev tried probing Page with a right when Page countered with the compact left hook that knocked him senseless.

Page had a distinguished amateur career, going 56-4. He was ranked second in the country as a junior amateur, coming up at the same time as Oscar De La Hoya and Shane Mosley. He qualified for the national championship tournament twice, getting ousted the first time on a disqualification. On his second trip, he lost to Lee Parker, costing him the chance to go to Colorado Springs and train for the '88 U.S. Olympic team.

Page felt he was robbed in the Parker decision. Frustrated and angry, he quit boxing between the ages of 16 to 19 to pursue a career of hanging out with friends and partying. He admits today it was the wrong choice.

Trouble and Page always seemed to collide, whether directly or indirectly. Page's best friend, Robert Jiles, was shot to death in his car on April 11, 1991. His older brother, Derrick, was shot and killed at the age of 27.

Page was his own worst enemy. When he was 18, he served five months in county jail in San Francisco for assault. His second offense was on a robbery charge. When a clerk refused to take back a pair of pants Page was returning, he pulled a pellet gun on her and took the $78 the pants cost. He did six months for that. He was back in county jail from December of '96 to September of '97 after he was found guilty of breaking into lockers and stealing

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money at a gym where he was working.

"James always seemed to get in trouble," said Don Chargin, who used to promote Page early in his career. "It was discouraging because he does have ability; he always did. I hope he does straighten it around; it seems as if he has. He just made some foolish mistakes, I think. He'd get in trouble, then call me from jail always asking for another chance. I saw this kind of success coming. I didn't let him go, he went to jail [in '96], then he went to King. Now that he's knocking on the door of becoming a champion, yeah, of course I have some regrets."

Page feels grounded for the first time in his life. He's hoping to buy a home—his first. His younger brother, Andre, is constantly by his side as an assistant to Page's main trainer, Willie Rush.

"I want to stick with boxing, and my younger brother sees me working hard, it's a good example to him," Page said. "A lot of the guys have money themselves hustling, they respect me. A lot of my buddies know I'm trying to stay away because there's a lot of jealousy out there. I didn't realize my survival would depend on boxing, like it does now. I didn't always go into every fight 100 percent. I used to go through my training nonchalant. I noticed when I trained and focused, I would be successful. Now I know the key to winning." ■

Foreman-Holmes (Positive)

(Continued from page 28)

fight with Holmes, who would win his first title one year later. The Birthday Bash is a rare chance for fans to experience a dream matchup. It's a couple of decades too late, but at least it's happening. If Ali-Louis or Dempsey-Johnson was on pay-per-view next week, even if they all were 50 years old, the switchboard at the local cable company would be lit up right now. And afterward, the result certainly would be used to determine what would have occurred if they actually had fought in their primes.

"It was one of those things that should have happened a long time ago," Foreman said of his upcoming fight with Holmes. "But I'm happy it didn't because it wouldn't have meant anything. This fight will lead the nation, the whole world, into the next millennium."

Foreman vs. Holmes in 1999 isn't remotely as attractive as it would have been in '76. But the fact that both fighters are close in age and ability will offer a glimpse of what might have happened two decades ago. Because of Foreman's 10-year hiatus and the fact that Holmes reached prominence in his absence, many people don't consider them contemporaries. But they are. They even fought a few of the same names: Ali, Ken Norton, Scott LeDoux.

The skills of Foreman and Holmes have deteriorated at a similar rate. Because of that and the fact that they always have been heavyweights, Foreman and Holmes should not be categorized with the likes of Roberto Duran, Sugar Ray Leonard, and Hector Camacho. That over-the-hill gang has made a lucrative career by becoming merely name opponents who continually rise in weight to fight strings of up-and-comers. That is not the case with Foreman and Holmes. They are peers. They are fighting each other.

Because they are close in age, the reasons the fight would have been intriguing long ago remain today, only on a lesser scale. Foreman was known for his brute strength back then, and he has proven to be an example of the old boxing adage "power is the last thing to go." Holmes became famous for possessing one of the finest jabs in the history of the sport, and he can still throw it with some zip. Just as he would have back then, Holmes will have an advantage in foot speed and defense this time around. But will those factors be enough to overcome Foreman's force? That question would have been asked during our nation's bicentennial, too. These fighters have the same strengths and weaknesses as they did back then. Their styles have not changed much. They are slower, softer versions of their former selves. There is no reason to believe the winner on January 23 wouldn't have done the same in '76.

Some critics of this fight are expecting a reprise of Bonecrusher Smith and Joe Bugner, who fought in July '98. That bout, which set a record for featuring the highest combined age between boxers at 93 years, ended in the first round when Smith dislocated his shoulder throwing a punch. What Foreman and Holmes have going for them, however, is that they have better skills than Smith and Bugner.

"I'm not getting in that ring as a 50-year-old man," Foreman said, "but as a conditioned athlete."

True, Holmes hasn't resembled even a fringe contender for some time, and his last fight was a shoddy performance against Maurice Harris in July '97. But Holmes has surprised before, most notably by upsetting Ray Mercer in '92 and then extending Evander Holyfield in a losing title bid later that year. And despite his age and faded skills, Holmes doesn't want to be embarrassed.

"It's pride, a lot of pride," Holmes said. "I don't want to go out there and lose and get beat up. He wants to win. The same thing for me."

The bout, promoted by Boxing International, is being billed as an exhibition of sorts. It is not for a title. It is not an eliminator. There has been no attempt to hide the fact that this bout is being done for fun. Still, regardless of whether it's because the fighters' combined age is 99, or because it's a battle between two legends, this bout is more riveting than several others that have been foisted upon us. Some examples: Evander Holyfield vs. Vaughn Bean, Buster Douglas vs. Lou Savarese, Oscar De La Hoya vs. Patrick Charpentier, Naseem Hamed vs. Wayne McCullough, Felix Trinidad vs. ... well, whomever.

Remember how amazed people were when Foreman knocked out Michael Moorer in '94 to become the oldest heavyweight champion in history? He captured the imagination of a nation, including people who didn't even care much for boxing. This bout should do the same, and the purses reflect that. Foreman will earn $10-million; Holmes will make $4-million.

"I'd like to wake up one morning and be old like anybody else," Foreman said. "But I keep looking in the mirror and saying 'Go for it, George.'"

That's it, old boys. Go for it. We'll be watching. ■

Tim Graham, a sportswriter for the Las Vegas Sun, is a regular contributor to this magazine.

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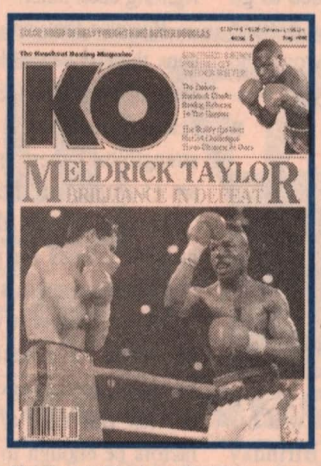

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Foreman-Holmes (Negative)

(Continued from page 29)

able. But none of the states, or the Association of Boxing Commissions, has even tried to challenge this flawed "right to work" premise. The officials pointed out that Foreman and Holmes were "different" than other fighters making comebacks and that the two former champs were special cases.

The problem is that unless the physical and mental deterioration is in its final stages, there is no examination that will show that the process is underway. Unlike other sports, in boxing this can be disastrous, because it is during the last bouts of a fighter's career that the damage leading to the punch-drunk syndrome most frequently occurs. CATscans, EEGs, and MRIs are used to reveal an injury, not to predict it or to measure the loss of athletic ability. There is no machine that can measure a man's ability to take a punch or to absorb the shock? Even so, it's obvious that the less somebody boxes, especially in the post-prime years, the less the possibility of suffering chronic brain damage.

Practically every boxing writer has had to struggle through interviews with former champions who suffered from the effects of their careers. These men vary in age from the early-40s through the late-70s. All of them fought too long and absorbed beatings when they were past their primes. You have to experience this situation to appreciate how disturbing and unnerving it is. Within a span of a few years, boxers such as Joe Louis, Sugar Ray Robinson, Rocky Graziano, and Billy Conn developed advancing stages of the various symptoms caused by their careers. While Louis fought until he was 37 and Robinson 45, Conn and Graziano retired at age 30.

The point is argued that fighters such as Archie Moore, Carmen Basilio, and a few others remained sharp years after they retired from the ring, but they are statistical anomalies. Let's not forget that Muhammad Ali, age 38, passed a battery of tests at the world renowned Mayo Clinic and was given a clean bill of health to fight Larry Holmes. When it came time to fight, Ali was a glorified punching bag.

Three of the four state officials interviewed for this article pointed out that both Foreman and Holmes are crafty veterans and really haven't sustained a serious beating in their prime or post-prime careers. The facts say differently.

Let's first take the case of Holmes, who won the title when he was 28. He had very tough fights with Mike Weaver (KO 12), Earnie Shavers (KO 11), Trevor Berbick (W 15), Renaldo Snipes (KO 11), Gerry Cooney (KO 13), Tim Witherspoon (W 12), Bonecrusher Smith (KO 12), Carl Williams (W 15), and Michael Spinks (L 12, L 12). These arduous bouts all occurred between ages 30-37. And the fourth-round destruction Holmes suffered at the hands of Mike Tyson a few years later was an emphatic beating. But 10 years and 21 fights later, he's still passing prefight physicals.

An examination of Foreman's record from 1969-74 shows a lot of short, easy fights. But then there was his knockout loss to Ali, the five-round brawl with Ron Lyle, and a 12-round loss to Jimmy Young. When Foreman launched his comeback 11 years ago, he feasted on a slew of cruiserweights and mediocre heavyweights who couldn't punch. But that all changed when he entered the title picture. Foreman survived 12 rounds with Holyfield, but sustained the worst beating of his career. Although he was awarded the decision against Alex Stewart, he endured another serious beating; his battered and swollen face will be remembered by all who saw the fight. It was after this bout that many boxing men concluded the novelty of Foreman's comeback had dissipated.

Nevertheless, encouraged by his enablers at HBO, he plodded through outings against Pierre Coetzer and Tommy Morrison before winning the title from Michael Moorer. And let's not forget that before Foreman landed the knockout punch, he was, like Ali vs. Holmes, little more than a catcher.

It's also a fact that Foreman's second career has not only lasted longer than the first, but the fights have been more competitive, and he's sustained more punishment. And to say, as three of the four state commissioners did, that Foreman and Holmes have looked better than the likes of Axel Schulz, Oliver McCall, Lou Savarese, Shannon Briggs, and Maurice Harris have in their most recent outings is absurd. That's like saying Hillary Clinton didn't look "that bad" in a string bikini—on a beach at a leper colony.

Eight decades ago, former champion Bob Fitzsimmons applied for a boxing license in New York and was denied. The commission reasoned that while the three-division former champ had a right to make a living, it was looking out for the best interest of the fighter, who was in his 50s. Basically, they were saving him from himself and serving the best interests of the sport.

There are accepted risks that boxers take every time they step into the ring, and state commissions have made great strides in minimizing those risks. Asking their respective state attorney generals to frame a legal argument to prevent such folly as Holmes-Foreman would be another great stride. ■

Ed Maloney is a World Boxing columnist and a former associate editor of THE RING.

Richie Mitchell

(Continued from page 47)

me in that ring," she fluttered afterward. "It does not matter to me that [he] could not win, that the great champion arose and shook himself together and at last beat Mitchell down. To me, the whole glory and ecstasy of that fight came in that one splendid moment when Mitchell arose superior to everything, did the impossible, and dropped the champion with that wonderful rally."

A wonderful rally is what Milwaukee had in mind when its gallant son returned from New York, and a large crowd was gathered at the station when "The Richie Mitchell Special" pulled in at 7:30 in the evening two days after the fight. But the shy idol they came to cheer wasn't ready to face them yet. Mitchell would slip into town alone the next day.

What the hometown crowd did find on board the train from New York would not have surprised Billy Gibson, although Emily Post herself might have bestowed her absolution under the circumstances. Talking about it with a reporter 65 years later, Fred Saddy chuckled when it was remarked that "Everyone on [the train] must've been pretty disconsolate."

"Everyone on it," recalled Saddy, "was pretty drunk." ■

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BOXING COLLECTOR'S NOTEBOOK

By Don Scott

There have been a number of boxing silks sold recently. These rare items are seldom seen, but are among the most beautiful boxing collectibles. The scarves, made of silk or linen, have fine designs woven into or printed on them, usually with a fighter in a fighting stance in the middle. They were quite popular before 1890 and were basically the equivalent of the satin jackets sold nowadays as souvenirs at major fight venues. The best of these are the silks of John L. Sullivan and Jake Kilrain. They were not, however, made for fight venues or as "betting silks," but, in part, to promote their rivalry.

In the 1880s, there was not only a war between Sullivan and Kilrain, but also between two rival sporting publications regarding who was the better fighter. The *New York Illustrated News*, with its founder, Arthur Lumley, had bolted from the *Police Gazette* and its founder, Richard K. Fox. Accounts of the day said that an actual fist fight between Fox and Lumley occurred at one point. What resulted, however, was that before the fighters fought and Kilrain was defeated, both publications produced beautiful silks and sold them. These run about 33" X 33" and are quite colorful.

Silks were also popular in England, and some dating back to the 1860s and beyond have been reported. So the silk has a long heritage. In the United States, a scarf believed to have been sold at the Jack Johnson-Jim Jeffries fight in Reno, Nevada, can sometimes be found. This blue scarf is smaller and plainer than the others mentioned, but features both fighters squared off with promoter/referee Tex Rickard between them.

Silks normally sell for $700 or more, depending on the condition, with a fine Sullivan silk going for as much as $1,500. Save those satin jackets, folks. In 100 years, who knows what they'll be worth.

• • •

CYBERNEWS: Lately, there has been a surge of boxing collectibles listed on various sites on the Internet. Just a year ago, when I first put my own Web site up for *Boxing Collector's News*, there wasn't much on the Net. Today, there are all sorts of auctions and sale sites, and if the state of the Internet market is any indication of what's to come, I guess the old *caveat emptor* (buyer beware) is more applicable to cyberspace than anywhere else.

There are some bargains, but you will have to dodge a lot of sharks before you find any sunken treasure. Browsing around, I've seen everything from an old Sullivan tobacco card available for a minimum bid of $1,800 to a signed George Foreman glove for $100. One well-meaning person placed what he believed to be a large signed photo of Harry Greb in one of those auctions. It was a nice photo, but it wasn't signed, and the seller amended his description when notified. A vintage John L. Sullivan photo was also on the block. It was vintage, but it wasn't Sullivan. That seller, however, ignored several requests to amend.

Remember, the best way to build a collection, whether dealing with the Internet or not, is research.

• • •

Just in case anybody thinks that all the rare boxing collectibles have been gobbled up, here's a list of some gems that were due to be auctioned off as we went to press: a Jack Johnson-Frank Moran program from Paris, a Tommy Burns-Bill Squires program from Australia, a large, signed photo of Joe Jeannette, a Rocky Marciano-Archie Moore fight site poster, a Jack Dempsey-Gene Tunney II program, a signed Peter Jackson photo, a Muhammad Ali-Ken Norton III site poster, a Sonny Liston-Eddie Machen poster, and the first issue of *Referee Magazine* (1903). These are truly rare pieces, and the selling of these quality items is a sign that the hobby is doing well. And don't forget, even if you can't afford to spend a lot of money for every expensive piece available, there are hundreds of affordable articles of memorabilia on the market. ■

Don Scott is editor and publisher of ***Boxing Collectors' News*** *and may be contacted through* THE RING.

WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were compiled as of August 1998, the WBC as of August 1998, and the IBF as of October 1998.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Lennox Lewis (GB)	C	–	–
Evander Holyfield (USA)	–	C	C
Zeljko Mavrovic (CROA)	1	2	–
Ray Mercer (USA)	2	3	5
John Ruiz (USA)	3	4	4
Oliver McCall (USA)	4	–	–
David Tua (NZ)	5	–	–
Larry Donald (USA)	6	10	7
Wladimir Klitchko (UKR)	7	12	–
Axel Schulz (GER)	8	–	–
Andrew Golota (POL)	9	–	–
Michael Grant (USA)	10	7	9
Henry Akinwande (GB)	–	1	6
Jade Scott (USA)	25	5	–
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	–	6	12
Michael Moorer (USA)	21	8	11
Vaughn Bean (USA)	–	9	8
Vacant	–	–	1
Francois Botha (SA)	23	–	2
Hasim Rahman (USA)	24	–	3
Chris Byrd (USA)	15	–	10

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)	C	–	–
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	–	C	–
Imamu Mayfield (USA)	–	–	C
Jacob Mofokeng (SA)	1	9	–
Johnny Nelson (GB)	2	–	–
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	3	–	12
Alexei Ilin (RUS)	4	–	–
Nate Miller (USA)	5	7	–
Dale Brown (CAN)	6	–	–
Arthur Williams (USA)	7	3	1
Darren Corbett (IRE)	8	4	5
Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)	9	11	8
Ken Murphy (USA)	10	6	4
Ezequiel Paixao (BRA)	–	1	–
Saul Montana (MEX)	15	2	2
Robert Daniels (USA)	13	5	–
Stefan Anghern (SWI)	–	8	–
Valery Vikhor (LAT)	–	10	–
Stefan Anghem (SWI)	–	–	3
Terry Dunstan (GB)	–	12	6
Ramon Garbey (CUB)	21	–	7
Uriah Grant (USA)	–	–	9
Andre Purlette (GUY)	19	–	10

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Roy Jones (USA)	C	C	–
Reggie Johnson (USA)	–	–	C
Richard Frazier (USA)	1	4	6
Montell Griffin (USA)	2	10	8
Derrick Harmon (USA)	3	12	12
Michael Nunn (USA)	4	–	–
Muhammad Siluvangi (ZAI)	5	2	11
Mark Prince (GB)	6	–	–
Henry Wharton (GB)	7	–	–
Jorge Castro (ARG)	8	–	–
Fabian Chancelay (ARG)	9	8	–
Hisashi Teraji (JAP)	10	–	–
Dario Matteoni (ARG)	24	1	–
Richard Hall (USA)	21	3	4
Virgil Hill (USA)	–	5	–
Lou Del Valle (USA)	11	6	5
Anthony Bigeni (AUS)	–	7	–
Ole Klemetsen (NOR)	12	9	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Crawford Ashley (GB)	15	–	2
Will Taylor (USA)	18	–	3
David Telesco (USA)	23	11	7
Antonio Tarver (USA)	28	–	9
Mark Prince (GB)	–	–	10

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Richie Woodhall (GB)	C	–	–
Frank Liles (USA)	–	C	–
Charles Brewer (USA)	–	–	C
Vincenzo Nardiello (ITA)	1	–	–
Robin Reid (GB)	2	12	10
Dean Francis (GB)	3	–	–
Thomas Tate (USA)	4	3	1
Eric Lucas (CAN)	5	4	–
Omar Sheika (USA)	6	–	–
Chris Johnson (CAN)	7	11	–
Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)	8	9	5
Mads Larsen (DEN)	9	–	–
Glenn Catley (GB)	10	–	–
Bruno Girard (FRA)	11	1	–
Dean Francis (GB)	–	2	9
Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)	–	5	12
Byron Mitchell (USA)	17	6	4
Herol Graham (GB)	–	7	–
Jorge Castro (ARG)	–	8	–
David Starie (GB)	15	10	11
Vacant	–	–	2
Sven Ottke (GER)	–	–	3
Reginaldo Andrade (BRA)	13	–	6
Rick Thornberry (AUST)	28	–	7
Antoine Byrd (USA)	–	–	8

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Hassine Cherifi (FRA)	C	–	–
William Joppy (USA)	11	C	–
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	–	–	C
Stephane Ouelette (CAN)	1	8	–
Robert McCracken (GB)	2	6	3
Keith Holmes (USA)	3	10	7
Julio Cesar Vazquez (ARG)	4	–	–
Kevin Palmer (USA)	5	–	–
Antwun Echols (USA)	6	–	–
Robert Allen (USA)	7	2	1
Agostino Cardamone (ITA)	8	9	8
Paul Vaden (USA)	9	–	–
Giovanni Pretorius (SA)	10	7	4
Darren Obah (AUSTRL)	–	1	–
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	3	–
Julio Cesar Green (DR)	–	4	6
Peter Venancio (BRA)	18	5	9
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	–	2
Anthony Andrews (GUY)	28	–	5
Michael Ward (USA)	–	–	10

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Keith Mullings (USA)	C	–	–
Laurent Boudouani (FRA)	–	C	–
Yori Boy Campas (MEX)	–	–	C
Javier Castillejo (SPA)	1	8	10
Tony Marshall (USA)	2	3	–
David Reid (USA)	3	6	9
Davide Ciarlante (ITA)	4	–	–
Terry Norris (USA)	5	–	–
Kookyui Song (KOR)	6	–	–
James Coker (USA)	7	–	–
Fernando Vargas (USA)	8	–	1
Said Bennajem (FRA)	9	–	–
Jose Alfredo Flores (MEX)	10	–	–
Guillermo Jones (PAN)	–	1	–
Kevin Kelly (USA)	12	2	–
Mamadou Thiam (FRA)	11	4	–
Emmett Linton (USA)	22	5	8
Fernando Vargas (USA)	–	7	–
Hector Camacho (PR)	–	9	–
Pedro Ortega (MEX)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Earnie Artango (AUSTRL)	25	–	3
Andrew Murray (GUY)	–	11	4
Aaron Davis (USA)	–	–	5
Raul Marquez (USA)	–	–	6
Carl Daniels (USA)	–	–	7

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	C	–	–
Vacant	–	C	–
Felix Trinidad (PR)	–	–	C
Derrell Coley (USA)	1	6	6
Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	2	–	–
James Page (USA)	3	3	5
Jose Luis Lopez (MEX)	4	2	10
Wilfredo Rivera (PR)	5	9	–
Nicolas Cervera (COL)	6	–	–
Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)	7	8	11
Maxim Nesterenko (RUS)	8	11	–
Suk Hyun Yun (KOR)	9	–	–
Sergio Acuna (ARG)	10	–	–
Andrei Pestraiev (RUS)	13	1	–
Oba Carr (USA)	12	4	–
Ike Quartey (GHA)	–	5	–
Jeff Malcolm (AUSTRL)	–	7	–
Frank Olsen (DEN)	14	10	–
Vincent Pettway (USA)	–	–	1
Hugo Pineda (COL)	–	–	2
Raul Frank (USA)	–	–	3

Vernon Forrest (USA)	11	–	4
Mahenge Zulu (ZAI)	–	–	7
Juan Negron (PR)	–	–	8
Antonio Marqurito (MEX)	27	–	9

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	I B F
Vacant	C	–	–
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	–	C	–
Vince Phillips (USA)	–	–	C
Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)	1	4	–
Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	2	2	6
Reggie Green (USA)	3	10	7
Diobelis Hurtado (CUB)	4	–	–
Rafael Ruelas (MEX)	5	–	–
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	6	1	2
Justin Rowsell (AUSTRL)	7	–	–
Soren Sondergaard (DEN)	8	–	–
Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)	9	–	–
Ismael Chaves (ARG)	10	–	–
Virgil McClendon (USA)	–	3	3
Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	–	5	–
Elio Ortiz (VEN)	–	6	–
Freddy Rojas (CHILE)	19	7	5
Juan Coggi (ARG)	13	8	–
Zab Judah (USA)	20	9	4
Terron Millett (USA)	–	–	1
Randall Bailey (USA)	–	–	8
Emanuel Burton (USA)	–	–	9
Alex Carillo (COL)	–	–	1 0

LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Cesar Bazan (MEX)	C	–	–
Jean-Baptiste Mendy (FRA)	–	C	–
Shane Mosley (USA)	–	–	C
Steve Johnston (USA)	1	–	10
Daomai Sithkodam (THAI)	2	–	–
Israel Cardona (USA)	3	6	1
Jong Kwon Baek (KOR)	4	–	–
Rick Yoshimura (JAP)	5	8	–
Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP)	6	–	–
Billy Schwer (GB)	7	5	9
Manuel Fernandes (FRA)	8	–	–
Lovemore Ndou (SA)	9	–	–
James Leija (USA)	10	12	–
Alberto Sicurella (ARG)	–	1	–
Santos Rebolledo (VEN)	–	2	–
Eduardo Morales (ARG)	–	3	6
Orzubek Nazarov (JAP)	–	4	–
Phillip Holiday (SA)	–	7	3
Manuel Fernandez (POR)	–	9	–
Angel Manfredy (USA)	14	10	–
Ivan Robinson (USA)	17	11	2
Justin Rowsell (AUSTRL)	–	–	4
Leavander Johnson (USA)	–	–	5
Arturo Gatti (USA)	–	–	7
Ben Tackie (GHA)	24	–	8

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Genaro Hernandez (USA)	C	–	–
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	–	C	–
Robert Garcia (USA)	–	–	C
Jesus Chavez (USA)	1	–	–
Goyo Vargas (MEX)	2	–	–
Santos Rebolledo (VEN)	3	–	10
Justin Juuko (UGA)	4	3	7
Floyd Mayweather (USA)	5	8	–
Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)	6	–	–
Gabriel Ruelas (MEX)	7	–	–
Kengo Nagashima (JAP)	8	12	–
Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV)	9	11	–
Tom Johnson (USA)	10	7	–
Lakva Sim (MON)	–	1	–
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	22	2	–
Gilbert Serrano (VEN)	–	4	–
Edson Xuxa Nacimento (BRA)	–	5	–
Antonio Hernandez (MEX)	–	6	–
Carlos Gerena (PR)	15	9	–
Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Ramon Ledon (CUBA)	–	–	3
Joel Casamayor (CUB)	11	–	4
Arnulfo Castillo (USA)	–	–	5
Harold Warren (USA)	–	–	6
Diego Corrales (USA)	–	–	8
Moises Pedroza (COL)	–	–	9

FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Luisito Espinosa (PHIL)	C	–	–
Fred Norwood (USA)	–	C	–
Manuel Medina (MEX)	–	–	C
Cesar Soto (MEX)	1	1	8
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)	2	–	–
Paul Ingle (GB)	3	–	4
Derrick Gainer (USA)	4	–	–
Carlos Rios (ARG)	5	–	–
Pablo Chacon (ARG)	6	11	–
Dramane Nabaloun (BKF)	7	–	–
Takeo Imaoka (JAP)	8	–	–
Injin Chi (KOR)	9	–	–
Billy Hardy (GB)	10	8	–
Victor Polo (COL)	–	2	1
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	–	3	–
Frederic Perez (FRA)	–	4	–
Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)	–	5	–
Genaro Rios (NIC)	–	6	–
Chamopekt Chorchamuang (THAI)	–	7	–
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	9	3
Angel Vasquez (PR)	–	10	2
Jesus Chavez (USA)	–	–	5
Hector Lizarraga (USA)	–	–	6
Steve Robinson (GB)	12	–	7
Tony Wehbee (AUS)	22	–	9
Teofilo Carranza (PER)	–	–	10

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Erik Morales (MEX)	C	–	–
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	–	C	–
Vuyani Bungu (SA)	–	–	C
Wayne McCullough (IRE)	1	–	–
Reynante Jamili (PHIL)	2	–	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	3	8	–
Michael Brodie (GB)	4	11	5
Junior Jones (USA)	5	–	–
Kozo Ishii (JAP)	6	–	–
Hector Acero-Sanchez (DR)	7	2	–
Jesus Salud (USA)	8	–	–
Ariston Clayton (USA)	9	–	9
Juan Carlos Ramirez (MEX)	10	–	–
Carlos Barreto (VEN)	–	1	–
John Johnson (USA)	–	3	4
Sergei Devakov (UKR)	11	4	8
Rafael Del Valle (PR)	–	5	–
Richard Carrillo (VEN)	–	6	–
Serge Poilblan (FRA)	22	7	–
Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)	13	9	2
Choe Chol Su (KOR)	–	10	–
Victor Llerena (COL)	–	–	1
Danny Romero (USA)	–	–	3
Salim Medjkoune (FRA)	–	–	6
Anell Barotillo (AUSTRL)	15	–	7
Jose Mendoza (COL)	–	–	10

BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)	C	–	–
Nana Konadu (GHA)	–	C	–
Tim Austin (USA)	–	–	C
Adan Vargas (MEX)	1	6	7
Paul Ayala (USA)	2	3	–
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	3	–	–
Danny Romero (USA)	4	–	–
Gerardo Martinez (MEX)	5	5	–
Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)	6	–	–
Cuauhtemoc Gomez (MEX)	7	8	–
John Michael Johnson (USA)	8	–	–
Oscar Garro (ARG)	9	12	–
Hugo Dianzo (MEX)	10	–	–
Lukhin CP Gym (THAI)	–	1	–
Sahoiu Phaisarn Gym (THA)	–	2	–
Johnny Bredahl (DEN)	13	4	–
Giovanni Andrade (BRA)	–	7	–
Kozo Ishii (KOR)	–	9	–
Johnny Armour (GB)	–	10	4
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Jesus Perez (COL)	27	–	3
Adrian Kaspari (INDO)	–	–	5
Albert Resilay (INDO)	–	–	6
Jorge Otero (COL)	–	–	8
Bernardo Mendoza (CHI)	–	–	9
Cesar Singo (ECU)	–	–	10

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	C	–	–
Satoshi Iida (JAP)	–	C	–
Johnny Tapia (USA)	–	–	C
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	1	4	–
Luis Bolanos (COL)	2	–	–
Raffy Montalban (PHIL)	3	–	–
In Joo Cho (KOR)	4	–	–
Keiji Yamaguchi (JAP)	5	–	–
Ratanachai Sor Voraphin (THAI)	6	11	2
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	7	1	–
Jose Rafael Sosa (ARG)	8	–	–
Pone Saengmorokot (THAI)	9	–	–
Akihigo Nago (JAP)	10	10	–
Veeraphol Sahaprom (THAI)	–	2	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	3	–
Julio Gamboa (NIC)	–	5	11
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	–	6	–
Takato Toguchi (JAP)	21	7	–
Evangelo Perez (PAN)	–	8	12
Felix Machado (VEN)	–	9	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Ubadel Soto (COL)	–	–	3
Ernesto Briceno (VEN)	–	–	4
Eric Morel (USA)	11	–	5
Pedro Pena (USA)	–	–	6
David Vinger (SA)	26	–	7
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	–	–	8
Sombak Singchawan (THAI)	–	–	9
Pedro Rincon (COL)	28	–	10

FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	C	–	–
Hugo Soto (ARG)	–	C	–
Mark Johnson (USA)	–	–	C
Gabriel Mira (MEX)	1	–	–
Raul Juarez (MEX)	2	9	–
David Guerault (FRA)	3	7	1
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	4	10	–
Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)	5	3	–
Chokchai Chokviwat (THAI)	6	–	–
Alex Ali Baba (GHA)	7	–	–
Will Grigsby (USA)	8	6	–
Yong Soon Chang (KOR)	9	–	–
Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)	10	–	–
Jose Bonilla (VEN)	–	1	–
Mauricio Pastrana (COL)	–	2	4
Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)	–	4	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	5	–
Jesper Jensen (DEN)	–	8	–
Irene Pacheco (COL)	–	–	2
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	12	3
Yodchingchai Sornthong (THAI)	–	–	5
Yuri Arbachakov (RUS)	–	–	6
Ilido Julio (COL)	17	–	7
Jose Landin (USA)	–	–	8
Pedro Alcazar (PAN)	–	–	9
Mike Trejo (USA)	–	–	10

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	C	–	–
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)	–	C	–
Vacant	–	–	C
Yosam Choi (KOR)	1	–	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	2	1	1
Phanieng Sasiprabha (THAI)	3	–	–
Oscar Andrade (MEX)	4	4	–
Gabriel Munoz (MEX)	5	–	–
Edgar Cardenas (MEX)	6	–	–
Hidenobu Honda (JAP)	7	5	–
Ladislao Vazquez (MEX)	8	–	–
Sangik Yang (KOR)	9	–	–
Sandre Oviedo (ARG)	10	–	–
Medngon 3K Battery (THAI)	22	2	–
Oswaldo Guerrero (MEX)	–	3	6
Carlos Murillo (PAN)	–	6	7
Hadao C.P. Gym (THAI)	–	7	–
Keiji Yamaguchi (JAP)	–	8	–
Pongsaklek Nakornton (THAI)	–	9	–
Panieng Pontarat (THAI)	–	10	–
Ratanapol Sor Vorapin (THAI)	–	–	2
Will Grigsby (USA)	–	–	3
Gill Ikeda (JAP)	–	–	4
Anis Roga (INDO)	–	–	5
Jose Sanjuanelo (COL)	–	–	8
Hernan Berrio (COL)	–	–	9
Manuel Jesus Herrera (DR)	13	–	10

STRAWWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	C	–	–
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	–	C	–
Zolani Petelo (SA)	25	–	C
Payak Nakornluang (THAI)	1	7	–
Andy Tabanas (PHIL)	2	10	2
Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)	3	12	–
Myung Sup Park (KOR)	4	8	–
Daniel Reyes (COL)	5	11	3
Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)	6	–	–
Satoru Abe (JAP)	7	5	–
Alex Sanchez (PR)	8	–	–
Jun Arlos (PHIL)	9	–	–
Lakchai Dechakul (THAI)	10	–	–
Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)	–	1	–
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	2	–
Ronnie Magramo (PHIL)	–	3	–
Rocky Lin (JAP)	–	4	–
Randy Mangubat (PHIL)	29	6	–
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	–	9	–
Luis Lazarte (ARG)	–	–	1
Eric Jamili (PHIL)	–	–	4
Mickey Cantwell (GB)	–	–	5
Faisol Akbar (INDO)	–	–	6
Rocky Palma (JAP)	–	–	7
Jose Laureano (PR)	–	–	8
Mongol Chareon (THAI)	–	–	9
Denkaosan Kaowichit (THAI)	–	–	10

CLASSIC

THE SEAN FAMILY

Or, How One O'Grady Plus One O'Grady Equals No Crown

By Mike Katz

(Editor's Note: This is a condensed version)

It's a running gag wherever boxing writers congregate: Pat O'Grady for manager of the year. His credentials are peccable.

All the good father did was get his kid Sean stripped of the WBA lightweight title for not fighting a journeyman lightweight named Claude Noel, form his own organization to give his kid that very same title, and then, in his first defense, get him knocked off by a substitute opponent before a paltry crowd in Little Rock, Arkansas, of all places.

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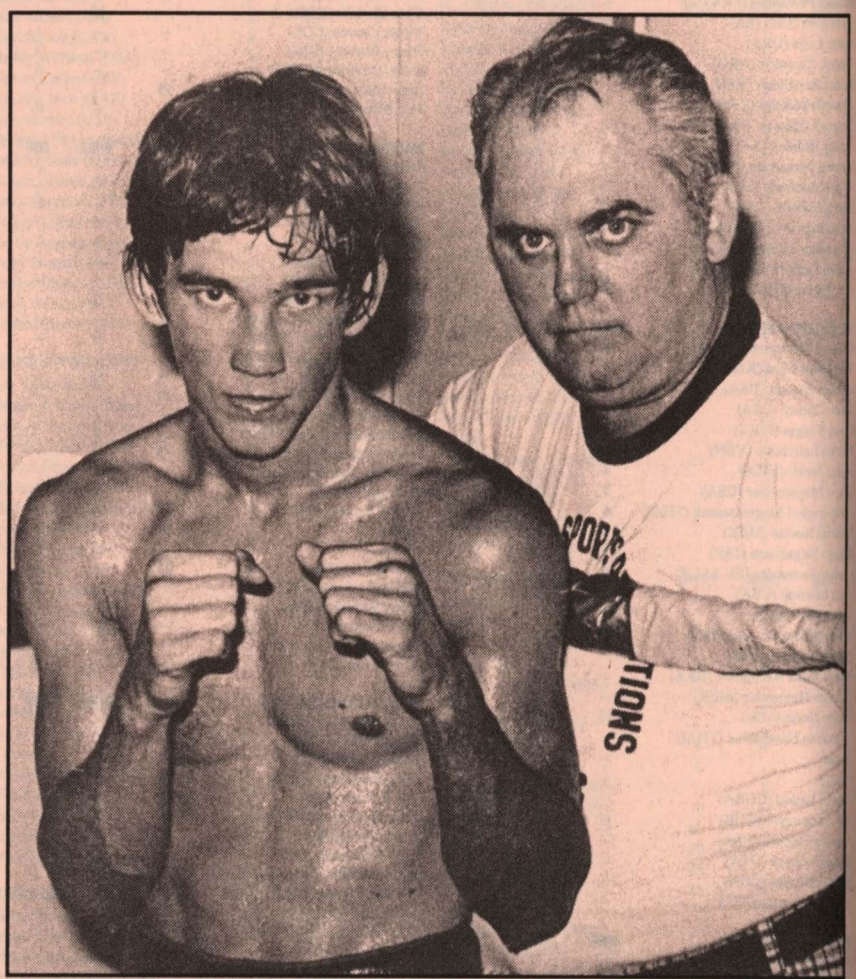

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From THE RING, February 1982

ROBS-A-SON

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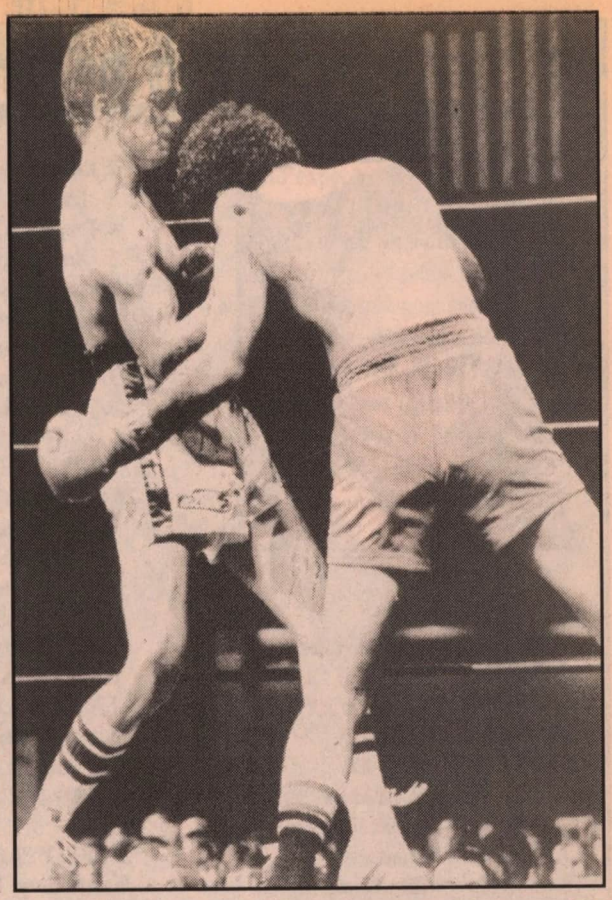
Pat O'Grady earned a couple of purple hearts, with clusters, in the South Pacific. He's earned the equivalent in boxing, from bouncing around the carnival circuits meeting all comers, to patching up other people's fingers in the darkest corners of America. After 40 years in the racket, he thought he finally had it made when Sean captured the WBA version of the lightweight title in one of the 1980s' best fights, a 15-round, one-sided slugfest with Hilmer Kenty. Pat should have known better. When Sean had the title taken away from him in a one-sided decision in a Federal court in Camden, New Jersey, Pat's kid was asleep—not in the ring, where it might not have hurt so much, but in a telephone booth in the court house.

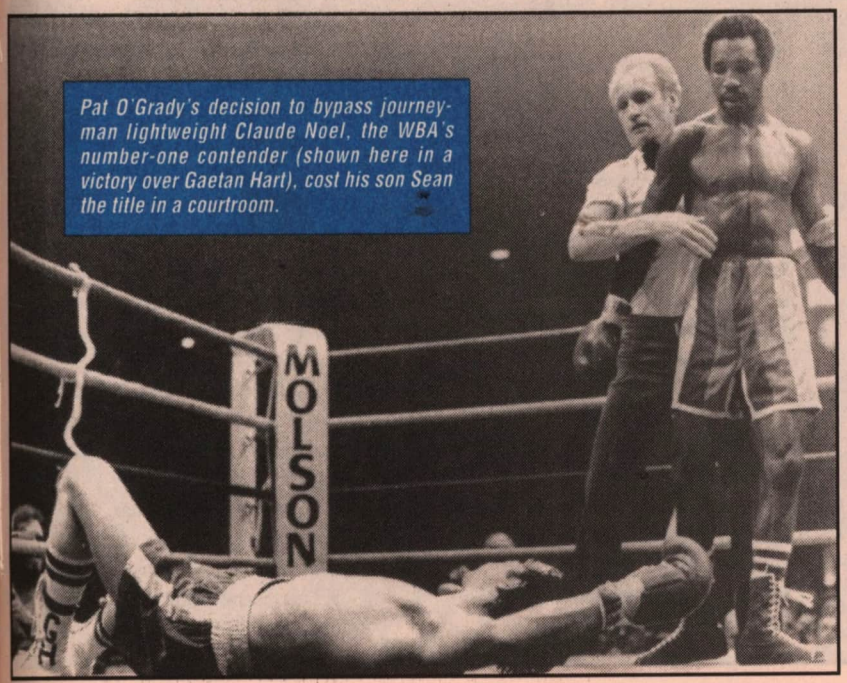
"Pat had been on the outside all of those years," said a sympathetic Mort Sharnik, the boxing adviser for CBS. "He thought it was his turn to cash in. He used to say, 'Now I want my time at the trough.'"

The trough, O'Grady discovered, left a bitter taste. He decided to buck Bob Arum—whose Top Rank Inc. had promoted the Kenty fight and held an option on Sean—and promote his kid's fights himself. Earlier, before the April 12 bout with Kenty, O'Grady had agreed to make the first defense against Noel, a 33-year-old clubfighter from Trinidad who, incredibly, had been ranked number one by the WBA.

When Kenty agreed to meet Sean O'Grady, the bubble gum kid whose angelic face, pre-med college career, and hard punching had made him a media star, the number one-rated Noel was dropped to number two in the rankings. And O'Grady, who had been number one earlier, was promoted. Noel complained and sued. A Federal judge ruled that, based on their signed pre-fight agreements to defend against Noel, the Kenty-O'Grady winner had to meet the boxer from Trinidad next or be stripped of his title—a rather strong argument, by the way, for *not* having a federal boxing commission.



Sean's boyish looks, pre-med smarts, and punching power made him a media star. Another plus for O'Grady was his heart, displayed in this 1978 fight with Japan's Shig Fukuyama, which he won despite blood streaming down his face from a nasty gash over his right eye.



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RING CLASSIC

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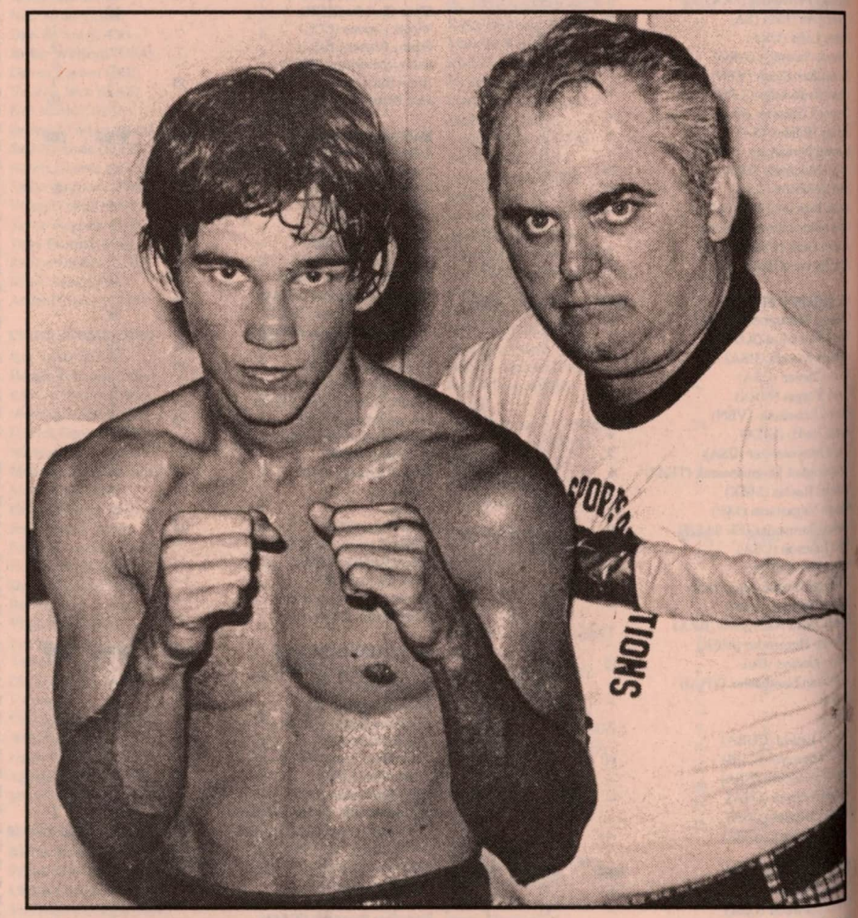

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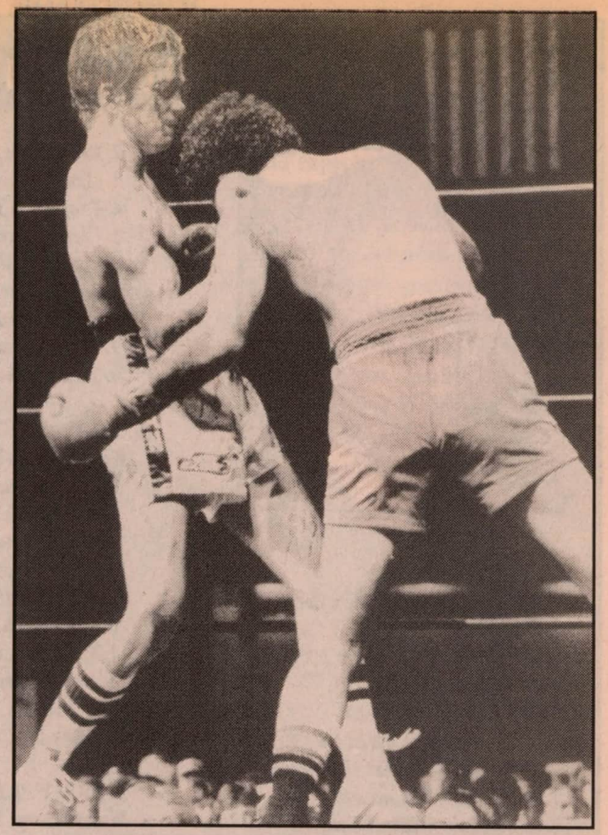

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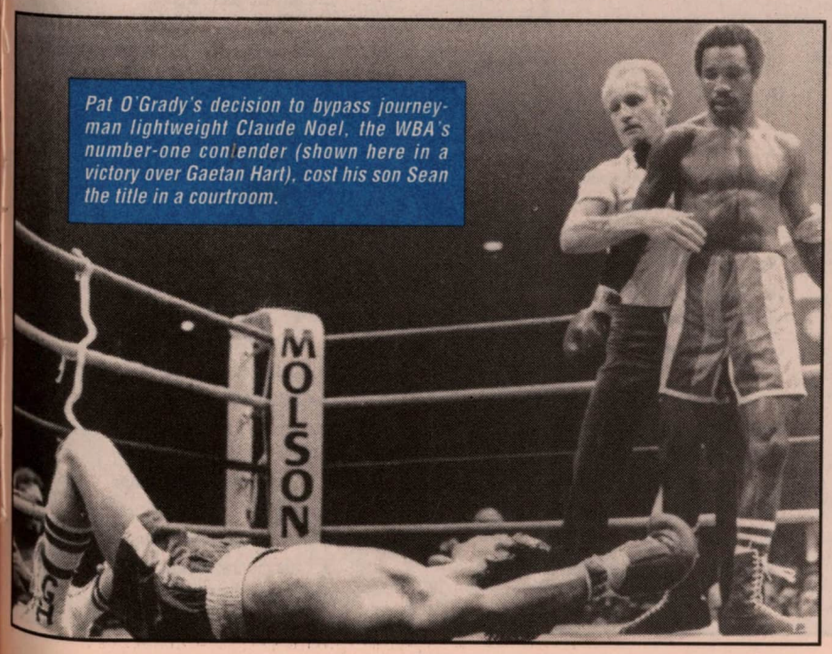

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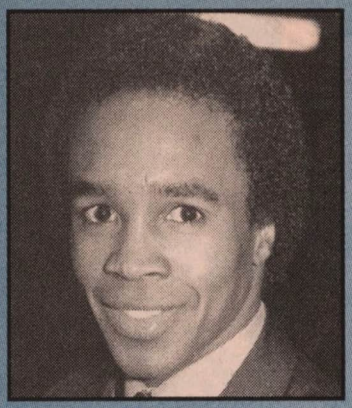
From THE RING, February 1982

THE RING RATINGS, February 1982



Ray Leonard

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Larry Holmes, Easton, PA
1. **Mike Weaver**, Los Angeles, CA
2. **Gerry Cooney**, Huntington, NY
3. **Michael Dokes**, Akron, OH
4. **Greg Page**, Louisville, KY
5. **Gerrie Coetzee**, South Africa
6. **Trevor Berbick**, Halifax, Nova Scotia
7. **Leon Spinks**, St. Louis, MO
8. **James (Quick) Tillis**, Chicago, IL
9. **Randall (Tex) Cobb**, Philadelphia, PA
10. **Renaldo Snipes**, Yonkers, NY

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Dwight Braxton, Camden, NJ
1. **Michael Spinks**, St. Louis, MO
2. **Matthew Saad Muhammad**, Philadelphia, PA
3. **Eddie Mustafa Muhammad**, Brooklyn, NY
4. **Jerry Martin**, Philadelphia, PA
5. **Carlos DeLeon**, Puerto Rico
6. **Marvin Camel**, Missoula, MT
7. **Murray Sutherland**, Bay City, MI
8. **Jerry Celestine**, New Orleans, LA
9. **James Scott**, Rahway, NJ
10. **Marvin Johnson**, Indianapolis, IN

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marvin Hagler, Brockton, MA
1. **Dwight Davison**, Detroit, MI
2. **Mustafa Hamsho**, Syria
3. **Wilford Scypion**, New York, NY
4. **Frank Fletcher**, Philadelphia, PA
5. **Tony Sibson**, England
6. **Fulgencio Obelmejias**, Venezuela
7. **Curtis Parker**, Philadelphia, PA
8. **Ray Seales**, Tacoma, WA
9. **Robbie Epps**, Clovis, NM
10. **Vinnie Curto**, Boston, MA

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Ray Leonard, Palmer Park, MD
1. **Wilfred Benitez**, Puerto Rico
2. **Ayub Kalule**, Uganda
3. **Maurice Hope**, England
4. **Tony Ayala Jr.**, San Antonio, TX
5. **Carlos Herrera**, Argentina
6. **Charlie Weir**, South Africa
7. **Roberto Duran**, Panama
8. **Gary Guiden**, Indianapolis, IN
9. **Walter Gomez**, Argentina
10. **Tidashi Mihara**, Japan

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Ray Leonard, Palmer Park, MD
1. **Thomas Hearns**, Detroit, MI
2. **Roger Stafford**, Philadelphia, PA
3. **Pipino Cuevas**, Mexico
4. **Roberto Duran**, Panama
5. **Randy Shields**, N. Hollywood, CA
6. **Bruce Finch**, Milwaukee, WI
7. **Milton McCrory**, Detroit, MI
8. **Adolfo Viruet**, Hoboken, NJ
9. **Colin Jones**, England
10. **Bobby Joe Young**, Steubenville, OH

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Aaron Pryor, Cincinnati, OH
1. **Saoul Mamby**, New York, NY
2. **Jo Kimpuani**, France
3. **Dujuan Johnson**, Detroit, MI
4. **Miguel Montilla**, Dominican Republic
5. **Monroe Brooks**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Johnny Bumphus**, Nashville, TN
7. **Willie Rodriguez**, Allentown, PA
8. **Lennox Blackmore**, Guyana
9. **Leroy Haley**, Las Vegas, NV
10. **Steve Hearon**, Houston, TX

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Alexis Arguello, Nicaragua
1. **Aaron Pryor**, Cincinnati, OH
2. **Andrew Ganigan**, Honolulu, HI
3. **Hilmer Kenty**, Detroit, MI
4. **Art Frias**, Los Angeles, CA
5. **Howard Davis Jr.**, Glen Cove, NY
6. **Sean O'Grady**, Oklahoma City, OK
7. **Rodolfo (Gato) Gonzalez**, Mexico
8. **Claude Noel**, Trinidad
9. **Gonzallo Montellano**, Los Angeles, CA
10. **Ray Mancini**, Youngstown, OH

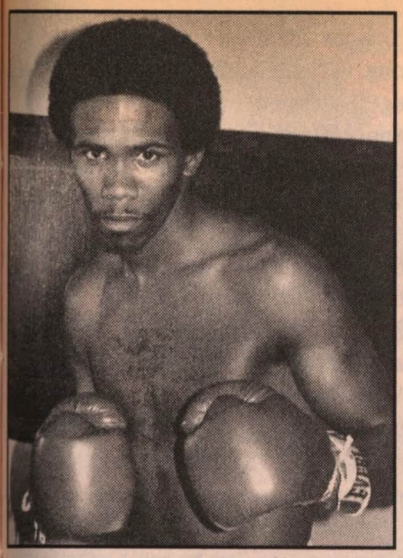
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Samuel Serrano, Puerto Rico
1. **Rolando Navarette**, Honolulu, HI
2. **Cornelius Boza-Edwards**, England
3. **Rafael (Bazooka) Limon**, Mexico
4. **Edwin Rosario**, Puerto Rico
5. **Bobby Chacon**, Pacoima, CA
6. **Yasutsune Uehara**, Japan
7. **Ildelfonso Bethelmy**, Venezuela
8. **Johnny Sato**, Stockton, CA
9. **John Verderosa**, Staten Island, NY
10. **Carlos Pinango**, Venezuela

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Salvador Sanchez, Mexico
1. **Eusebio Pedroza**, Panama
2. **Wilfredo Gomez**, Puerto Rico
3. **Juan LaPorte**, New York, NY
4. **Rocky Lockridge**, Paterson, NJ
5. **Ruben Castillo**, Bakersfield, CA
6. **Patrick Ford**, Guyana
7. **Mario Miranda**, Colombia
8. **Pat Cowdell**, England
9. **Roberto Rubaldino**, Mexico
10. **Paul Ferrari**, Australia

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Wilfredo Gomez, Puerto Rico
1. **Sergio Palma**, Argentina
2. **Mike Ayala**, New York, NY
3. **Leo Cruz**, Dominican Republic
4. **Ricardo Cardona**, Colombia
5. **Jaime Garza**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Juan (Kid) Meza**, Los Angeles, CA
7. **Lupe Pintor**, Mexico
8. **Nicky Perez**, Tucson, AZ
9. **Soon-Hyun Chung**, Korea
10. **Roberto Rubaldino**, Mexico

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jeff Chandler, Philadelphia, PA
1. **Lupe Pintor**, Mexico
2. **Chul-Ho Kim**, Korea
3. **Kiko Bejines**, Mexico
4. **Albert Davilla**, Los Angeles, CA
5. **Oscar Muniz**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **Eijiro Mutara**, Japan
7. **Johnny Carter**, Philadelphia
8. **Jose R. Narvaez**, Argentina
9. **Rafael Orono**, Venezuela
10. **Hurricane Teru**, Japan

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Antonio Avelar, Mexico
1. **Hilario Zapata**, Panama
2. **Juan Herrera**, Mexico
3. **Katsuo Tokashiki**, Japan
4. **Hwan Jin Kim**, Korea
5. **Rafael Pedroza**, Panama
6. **Gustavo Ballas**, Argentina
7. **Candido Tellez**, Mexico
8. **Betulio Gonzalez**, Venezuela
9. **Luis Ibarra**, Panama
10. **German Torres**, Mexico



1976 Olympic gold medalist Howard Davis was offered by CBS as a challenger for Sean's WAA lightweight title, a dubious championship created by his father. The deal was nixed when Davis injured his ribs during training.

fiction books ever written about boxing: *Sean O'Grady, Living Legend.* Champ Thomas, who worked the carny circuit with Pat, was also the referee for several of Sean's fights. But no matter. Sean O'Grady became the first WAA world champion, but no network would bill his first defense as a "title bout." CBS, however, did agree to pay championship purses for O'Grady's fight against Howard Davis, the 1976 Olympic hero.

Pat O'Grady continued to make mistakes. First, he looked everywhere for a place to hold the WAA title fight, ignoring the fact that those places willing to allow such billing were the same places that couldn't care less about the match. It wound up in Little Rock, where it drew somewhere between 300 and 500 spectators—less than a University of Arkansas pep rally—while it easily could have been in Hartford, Connecticut, or even the Boston Garden.

"There was a rumor going around Boston that the fight would be there," said Shamik. "For years Pat had struggled to be on top; now everything went wrong."

Next, Davis went wrong, injuring a rib in training and threatening the $200,000 payday CBS had promised O'Grady. The network insisted upon a legitimate substitute and offered James "Bubba" Busceme, the comebacking Texas southpaw journeyman. Pat O'Grady insisted Sean should get an extra $50,000 "to fight that southpaw running son of a bitch." CBS then offered Andy Ganigan, the hard-punching Hawaiian southpaw, a much more dangerous opponent than Busceme.

"Ganigan will stand and fight," the network argued. "Yes," Pat agreed, "Sean will take a cut to $225,000." The original purse, in case you had forgotten was $200,000, but Pat O'Grady was willing to "take a cut" to $225,000. He had justifiably earned his reputation as being impossible to deal with.

He should have asked for more. Sean, feeling the effects of impacted wisdom teeth (subsequently removed), still in the dumps after having his WBA title stripped, and having prepared for a right-hander, was hardly in the mood to fight. Twenty minutes before the first bell, he was asleep in his dressing room. He should have found a comfortable phone booth. Ganigan knocked him down three times in the second round and now has the dubious distinction of being the second WAA world champion.

The WAA title, in fact, is not the one Pat O'Grady wants Sean to win back. He is after Noel and the WBA crown. Noel has been crowing that Sean was afraid to fight him. Pat wants to correct that image. He always felt Noel was an "easy" opponent, but he wanted Sean to make his first defense for *his* promotional company, not Arum's—Arum's contract be damned.

Pat O'Grady said he has "big city incentives," but has been forced to ply his trade in what he calls "the gaslight district" of the rural Midwest. "The real story is when somebody from the gaslight district tells a Bob Arum to take his $250,000 and stick it," he said. "I had the gall to say that to Arum. That's a hell of a lot of principle to fight for, $250,000, and maybe in my later years I'll kick myself in the ass for it, but at the time I thought I was absolutely right."

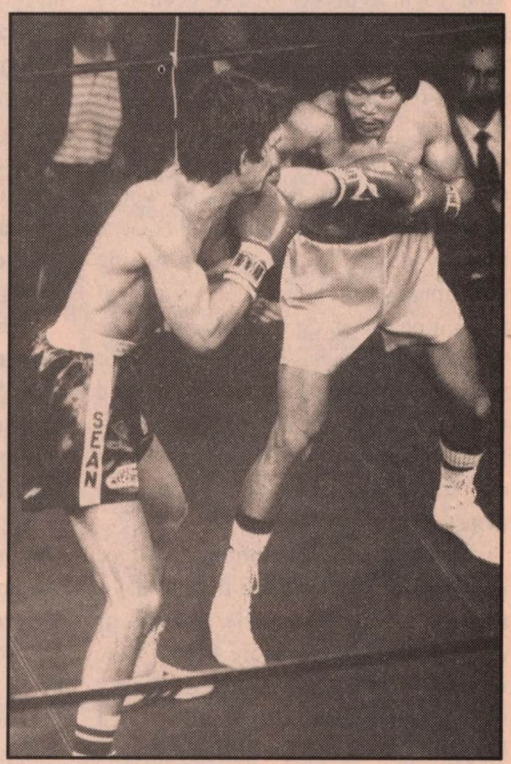
Even O'Grady is not sure he did the right thing now. "Certainly, you have second thoughts," he said, "but you have to stand up and be counted."

He has been standing up a long time. He's a big man, over 200 pounds, which makes it hard to believe he fought as a welterweight, but the first thing you notice about Pat O'Grady are his wild, black-Irish eyes. They are the eyes of a hypnotist—he has been called a "Svengali"—blazing eyes one would expect in a wild man. He has always been kind of wild.

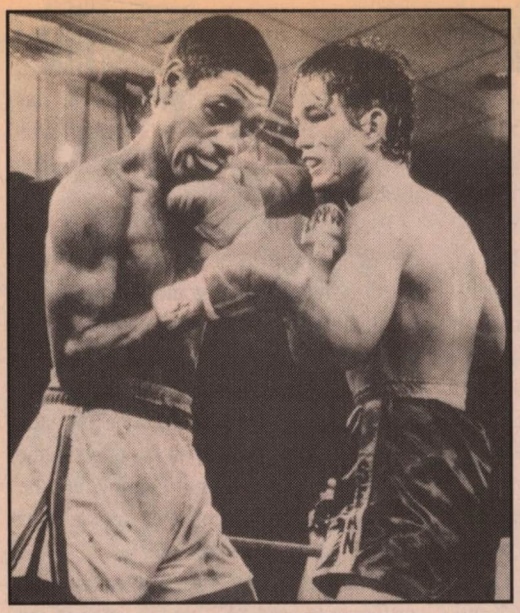
Pat O'Grady was born in Fort Worth, but after his father died of tuberculosis, he was raised by his maternal grandparents in Fort Worth and Lincoln, Nebraska. "My mother was 15 or 17 years old, depends on how she tells it, when she was married, and she remarried later, so I was in the way," he said. "My grandfather worked on the railroad, the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy, and he was transferred to Lincoln. My grandparents were really too old to raise me."

When he was 14, Pat changed his birth certificate to read "17" and enlisted in the Marines. World War II was going on, so few questions were asked. "They were taking everybody in those days," said O'Grady. "Line up and sign up. I had a change of heart overseas after I had my first battle," he said. "I told them I was only 15, but they just told me they needed good men."

In Champ Thomas' book, Pat is described at getting so angry at the Japanese for shooting at him, he tore into



CBS insisted on a legitimate contender to replace Davis and got one in hard-punching Hawaiian southpaw Andy Ganigan, who knocked Sean out in two rounds. The financial haggling over the fight confirmed Pat's reputation for being hard to deal with.



Pat always wanted his "own" world champion, one he could raise from a pup. "I never thought I'd find him in my own house," Pat said on April 12, 1981, when Sean won the WBA title by 15-round decision over Hilmer Kenty in Atlantic City.

the enemy so hard that he was nominated for the Congressional Medal of Honor. Pat denies the story saying, "I wasn't much of a hero." But he *was* wounded at Guadalcanal and Okinawa. Discharged from the Great Lakes Naval Station at the age of 19, he found himself in Chicago. That's where he decided to become a boxer.

He had always "messed around" with the sport, but now he was fighting in Chicago, in Iowa, in Nebraska, in Colorado, "clear out to the Coast and down to Texas." During summers, he would work in the carnivals, fighting all comers, those who tried to earn $50 by staying three rounds with him. Pat was supposed to fight only men up to 175 pounds—he was about 142 pounds in those days—"but my partner, the barker, who was supposed to fight the bigger guys, was drunk most of the time, and I wound up fighting everyone. It was hard times. You had to make money."

He fought a lot. The carnival had three shows a day "and you do that 30 days, that's a lot of fights." He hustled, of course. "The biggest score I ever made was when Irving Cohen brought Rocky Graziano to Kansas City to fight Cecil Hudson," he said. "There was a fighter named Ray Lee, who was 'The Big White Hope' from the Kansas City area, and the promoter, a guy named Frankie Gatto, put me in with him for the semi-windup.

"Gatto was paying $1,000, and he was also a bookie. He made the odds on my fight 10-1. I asked him if I could bet my purse on myself and he said, 'Sure, go right ahead.' I made $10,000. I was rich. So I said to myself, 'What do rich people do?' Well, I had come down to Kansas City by train from Omaha and now I decided to go back by plane. I had never flown before. The first thing I did was buy me a big cigar, and they took it away from me when I got on board. The plane was an old DC-3 that sat on its tail. We had a lot of trouble taking off, the thing kept bouncing around, and I thought to myself, *Jeez, these rich people must be crazy.* And the hostess was spilling drinks all over everyone, and everyone was throwing up and getting sick. We got on the tail end of a tornado and I was scared to death. I literally kissed the ground when I got off that plane. I've been a white-knuckle flier ever since."

The next time he flew was to answer an urgent call for a sparring partner for Kid Gavilan, whom O'Grady regards as the "second-greatest pound-for-pound fighter I ever saw." Sugar Ray Robinson, of course, was number one, and their title fight O'Grady considers the best welterweight fight in history. Once, he knocked Kid Gavilan down in sparring, but O'Grady was not a great boxer. There were other callings in the fight game.

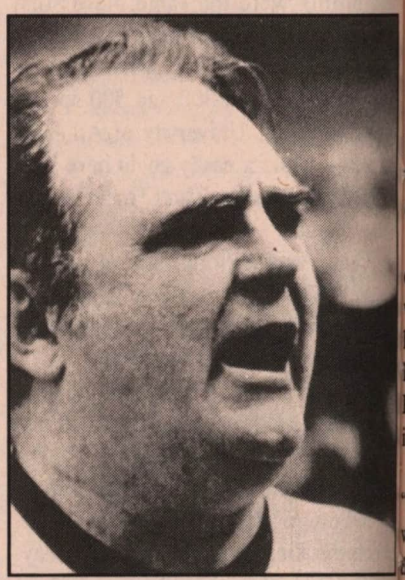
"There's a guy down in Iowa, Pinky George, a friend of Jack Dempsey's and an old friend of mine. He saw that when I used to fight I'd be trying to count the house, and he told me, 'What're you fighting for, you should be promoting.'" With George as co-promoter, O'Grady made his promotional debut in Council Bluffs in 1946. He also fought the main event, where he got stopped between the seventh and eighth.

"Norbert Pat O'Leary was the number-three welterweight at the time," said O'Grady, "and he was supposed to fight this guy out of Chicago, Luther Rollins. But Rollins didn't want to take a check for his purse, he wanted cash. And, besides, I think he was afraid of O'Leary, so he left town. I went on in his place."

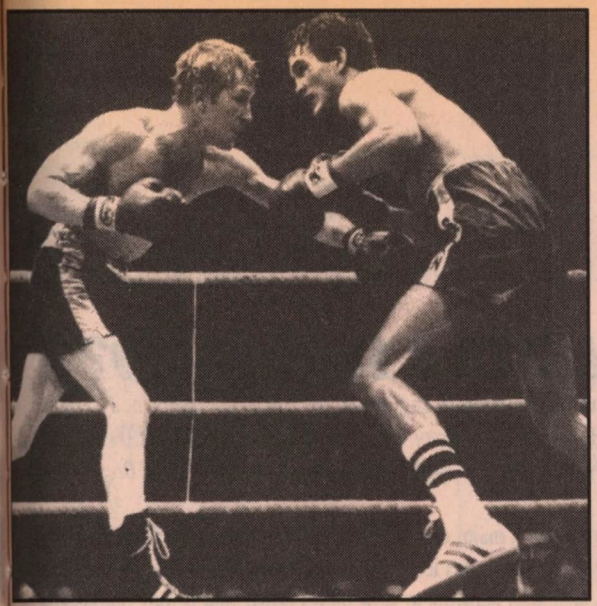
Knowing that his place was not in the ring, O'Grady became a promoter, a manager, a trainer, and a cornerman. He apprenticed as a cutman under Jack Shugrue, one of the best in California, and was associated with four world champions: Curtis Cokes, Rodolfo Gonzalez, George Foreman, and Ken Norton. He trained amateurs at the Pan-Am Recreation Center in Austin, Texas, and says he won the team title in the Fort Worth Golden Gloves eight times. "In 16 years in Austin, I had 11 world-rated fighters and I had never paid anybody a dime to rate one of my fighters."

Always, he wanted his own world champion, one that he could raise from a pup. "I never thought I'd find him in my own house," O'Grady said that day in Atlantic City after O'Grady had dog-whipped Kenty for the WBC title. Sean had come close to winning the WBC title the year before, seemingly on his way to beating James Watt in Glasgow when the Scot landed a beautiful headbutt that cut Sean badly and caused the fight to be stopped—with Watt the winner and still champion—in the 12th round.

But in his performance against Watt—and later his victory over Kenty—Sean proved at least that he was not another in a long line of Pat O'Grady trumped-up fighters, men like Humphrey McBride, a 340-pounder who Pat fashioned after Humphrey Pennyworth, right down to the hat in the ring and long socks, or his cur-



Pat said he's lived through the gangster era in boxing, and he'll live through the Don King-Bob Arum era, too.



Sean had come close to winning the WBA title in 1980 against Jim Watt in Glasgow, Scotland. The fight was stopped in the 12th because of a gaping cut on Sean's forehead, stemming from a Watt headbutt.

...ent heavyweight (and son-in-law married to Sweet Rosie O'Grady), Monte Masters.

Sean's battle in Glasgow was even more impressive because of the background of death threats, received in a letter by Pat on 10 a.m. fight day. The anti-Catholic sentiment in Britain had been stirred up and got pretty ugly—although Pat has been married five times and considers himself a "defrocked Catholic," while Sean is a frequent attender of mass.

"This one detective sergeant came to the hotel and told Sean, 'They might get off one shot, but then we'll get him,' and I said, 'Thanks a lot, we needed that,'" Pat recalled. "I'll tell you how serious it was. We had the Criminal Investigation Division in, and there were 500 uniformed policemen at the stadium. And they wouldn't let us fly out to London, but made us to go to Ireland.

"Alexis Arguello is one of my friends, and he's fought all over the world. I asked him once where he thought the worst place to fight was, and he said England. Just ask Marvin Hagler. Or Howard Davis. When he was in Scotland to fight Watt, he had it even worse. They spat on him and called him 'nigger.' We were a little more fortunate than Davis. We had a few Catholic people who befriended us."

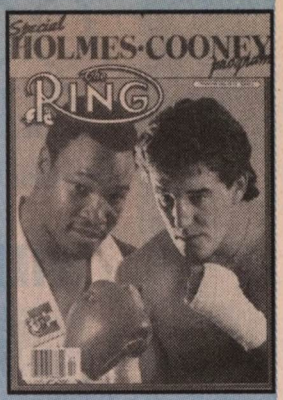
Little Rock proved to be Sean's undoing, costing him not only his WAA title, but also apparently his job as a broadcaster with CBS. Pat did not like the sight of his son on the canvas and has promised Sean, who celebrated his 23rd birthday on February 10, that if it happens again, it's back to medical school. Besides, Pat thinks he has a lightweight "even better than Sean" in Frank Newton. Or so he says. And he says a lot.

"The wheel of fortune has a way of turning around," he said. "I lived through the gangster era in boxing and I'll live, God willing, through the Don King-Bob Arum era. I've lived through the NBA and I'll live through the WBC."

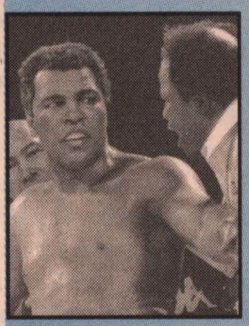
But what about the WAA?

The "Manager Of The Year" didn't even mention it. ■

THE RING, February 1982

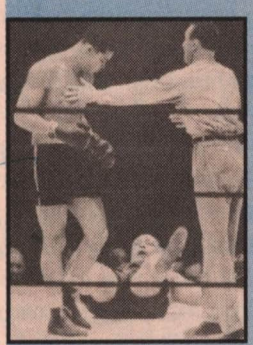


The Cover: THE RING provided a special program section previewing the WBC heavyweight title fight between Gerry Cooney and Larry Holmes. The section included bios of each fighter, highlighting special events in their careers as well as predictions. Former champ Muhammad Ali said, "I don't know who's going to win, but Cooney might hit Larry so hard his kinfolks in Africa might feel it."

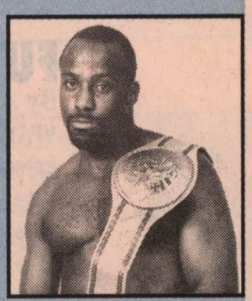


The Curtain Closes: THE RING caught up to Ali in the Bahamas when "The Greatest" came to the realization that his illustrious career had come to an end after a decision loss to Trevor Berbick. Asked about his fading skills, Ali replied, "They have gone, not *may* have gone. They have gone."

A Costly Joke: Old-time boxing manager Joe Humphreys spun a yarn about how he indirectly made the Joe Gans-Battling Nelson fight *(pictured)* that launched promoter Tex Rickard's legendary career. Humphreys replied to a telegram from Rickard with a wise crack, consequently blowing a big payday for Terry McGovern, Humphreys' fighter.



Things We'll Remember: THE RING recalled some of the great records from the stellar career of former heavyweight champ Joe Louis: 25 defenses of the title; the longest-lasting heavyweight title reign; and the most fights with receipts of $100,000 or more. Great Louis bouts against James J. Braddock and "Two Ton" Tony Galento *(pictured)* were also remembered.

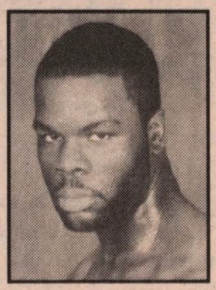


Fighter Of The Month: Dwight Braxton, who would later change his name to Dwight Muhammad Qawi, proved why he was given the nickname "The Camden Buzzsaw," as he sliced through WBC light heavyweight champ Matthew Saad Muhammad to win the title by 10th-round knockout.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

WILL MICHAEL BE GRANTED A SHOT IN '99?



Grant: Ready to make his move

The first half of 1998 couldn't have gone any better for towering young heavyweight **Michael Grant**. He made his HBO debut in January with a five-round demolition of **David Izon**, then followed that up in May by knocking out **Obed Sullivan** in the main event of a *Boxing After Dark* show.

But the second half of the year was a major disappointment for Grant and his fans. His return to the ring was delayed first by the gash over his left eye suffered in the Sullivan fight, then there was his August wedding and a bout with hepatitis to slow things down, and before you knew it, '98 was over.

After a seven-month layoff, Grant, 28-0 (20), is more eager than ever to step back in the ring. "Man, 1999's gonna be a mobile year for me," he predicted. "I'm not really concerned about the layoff affecting me or my popularity, I just want to get back to fighting."

Grant is scheduled to fight again in January, though the opponent and the exact date were not yet set at press time. Grant said he expects the fight will be against "somebody in the top 15," another Izon/Sullivan-caliber fighter. One name that had been mentioned was comebacking **Razor Ruddock**, but Grant doubts that will happen. "I get the feeling his people don't want anything to do with me," he said.

After his January return, will Grant, in the minds of many the heir-apparent to the heavyweight throne, get the world title shot he craves? A lot depends on the unification fight between **Evander Holyfield** and **Lennox Lewis**, set for March 13.

"It's a great possibility that I'll get a title shot if Lennox Lewis and 'Holy' don't fight," Grant said, implying that he expects his friend, Holyfield, to win, and that he and "The Real Deal" would be unlikely to ever fight. "If they don't fight, or if Lennox wins, I'd be a fool not to want a shot at Lennox. Lennox is the number-one guy on my list. But if that doesn't happen, I'll just take 'em as they come."

SHOWTIME BOSS ENVISIONS BANNER YEAR

Larkin: Psyched for '99

If you've read the cover story in this magazine, you know THE RING thinks there's plenty of reason to be high on boxing going into '99. One notable person who shares that sentiment is **Jay Larkin**, the executive producer of Showtime Championship Boxing.

"There appears to be a moment of brightness for boxing coming," Larkin said. "This coming year will be a transition year, especially among the heavyweights; Holyfield and Tyson will redefine themselves. If Evander beats Lewis, and I believe he will, what happens to Lennox Lewis? He becomes a blip on the radar.

"The lighter guys will be moving up into more competitive divisions. How long will **Oscar De La Hoya** stay at welter? The middleweights may finally come together and unify, **Bernard Hopkins** may become the dominant force in that division. I think guys like **Yory Boy Campas**, assuming he gets by **Fernando Vargas**, and **Shane Mosley** will take more of a center stage. **Roy Jones** is a great question mark going into '99. Will he move up? He may be the most unfulfilled promise in boxing history. There are a lot of intriguing situations developing, and boxing is in a position to enjoy a bit of a renaissance in '99."

FUTURE FIGHTS

By Art Manteris

VP/Director of Race and Sports Operations Las Vegas Hilton SuperBook

Favorite	Underdog	Odds	The Skinny
Mike Tyson	Frans Botha	2½-1	No sure victory for Iron Mike
Mike Tyson	Lou Savarese	3-1	Good test for Tyson
Mike Tyson	Axel Schulz	5-1	Axel made to order
Michael Grant	Razor Ruddock	18-1	Hope it doesn't happen
Keith Mullings	David Reid	3-2	I like the champion
George Foreman	Larry Holmes	2½-1	Great fight in '79, not '99

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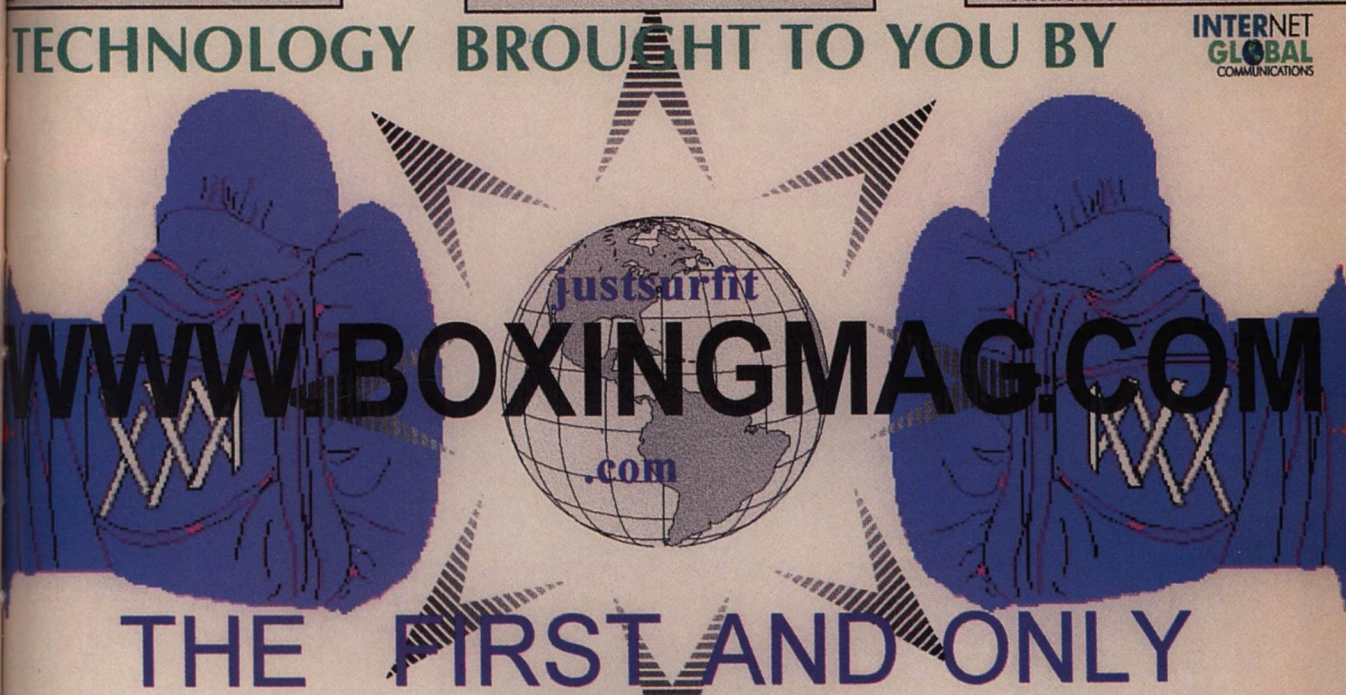

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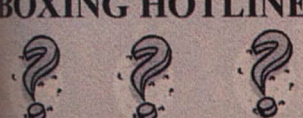

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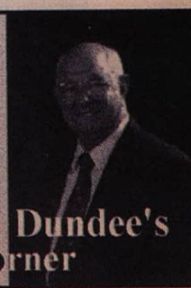

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